

BĀBĀ NĀNAK

HARJEET SINGH GILL



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revised edition 2016

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*nikke hūde tāge čāre  
vadde hoe hal vāhiā  
būde hoe mālā pherī  
te rāb dā ulābā lāhiā*

As a child, I was a shepherd. As an adult,  
I ploughed the fields. Now, in old age,  
I pray to appease the Almighty Lord...  
Thus a popular Sūfi saying sums up  
the three steps in the life of a Punjabi.  
Another Sūfi discourse warns the young girl  
not to waste time in playing. She should prepare  
her dowry, for soon she will have to leave her parents'  
home, *peke*, to go to her in-laws, *sauhre*...These  
streets of her father will, one day, be only a dream.  
At the same time, the obdurate Qāzī can also not  
stop the ultimate reunion.

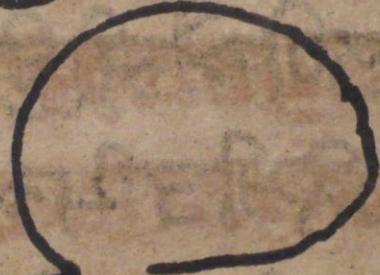
*bālpan khéd le kuṛīe nī  
terā aj ke kal muklāvā  
sauhre kār albat jāṇā  
peke kūṛā dāvā*

*ik din tenū supnā thīsan  
galīā bābal vālīā vo  
uḍ gae pāur phullā de kolō  
saṇ pattar saṇ dālīā vo  
jis tan lagge soī tan jāṇe  
hor gallā karn sukhāltā vo  
rauh ve qāzī dil nahiō rāzī  
gallā hoīā te hovan vālīā vo*

I have followed the dictates of the first Sūfī discourse  
but have reversed the cycle of the second commandment...  
I spent (wasted) my youth in the streets of Paris (playing  
with) writing, teaching, discoursing on French intellectual  
tradition, of Abélard, Port Royal Logic, Condillac, the modern  
philosophers of signification (included in my lectures at the  
Collège de France on Signification in Buddhist and French  
traditions in 1998), the tradition of my empirical as well as  
conceptual in-laws, *sauhre*, to finally compose this biographical  
discourse of Bābā Nānak, to come back to my Punjabi  
parents, *peke*...

Before the first edition of Bābā Nānak was commented upon  
by eminent scholars in 2003, the text was appreciated by my friends,  
Padamvir, Gobind Thukral and L P Singh at the Institute of  
Advanced Study, Shimla. Grateful acknowledge is due to their  
affection and their encouragement...H S G.

ਅਗਲਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਾਨਾ ਰਾਮ (ਅਗਲਾ ਮਾਨਸ) ੧੦  
ਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਚਾਰੇ ਗਜਿ ਤੁਤੁ ਮਲਾ ਵਹੁ ਤਿਤ ਰੀਛਾ  
ਗੁਬਕੇਦ ਤੇ ਕਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਾਣਿ ਵਿਲਾ ਵਹੁ ਆਨਾ  
ਪ੍ਰਾਣਾ ਰੂਪਾ ਦਾ



ੴ ਚਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ੧  
ਜੀਉ ਗੁਰੂ ਇਜਨਾ ਬਰਿ ਮੇਵਾ ਲਗਾ ਗਇਆ  
ਕੁਰਖਾ ਇਆ ਜੀਉ ਪ੍ਰਗਨ ਸਕੁ ਨੀਲਾ ਈਜੀ

*for my mother*

*Bibi Gurcharn Kaur*



Kar Seva

Illustrations by Anila Ariane Gill  
present the ambiance in which  
Bābā Nānak might have travelled  
during his Udāsis

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New Delhi.

੭ ਓਸਤਿਨ ਮੁਕਰਤ ਪੁਰਖੁਨਿਰ ਭੁਉ ਨਿਰ ਹੈ ਰਾਮਕਾਲ ਮੁਗ ਤਿਆਜੂ ਰਿਮੇ ਭੈ  
 ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ ਜਪਾ ॥ ਆਦਿਸ ਚੁਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁਹੈ ਬੀਮ ਚੁਗ ਕਰੈ ਮੀਵੀਸ  
 ਚੁਜੁਚੈ ਸੇਰਿ ਨੋਹੈ ਵੈ ਜੇ ਸੇਗੀ ਲਖ ਵਾਗ ਜਾਜੁ ਧੈ ਚੁਪੁਹੈ ਵੈ ਜੇ ਲਾਇ ਰਾ  
 ਲੀ ਵਿਤਾਗ ਬੁਖਿਆ ਬੁਖਨ ਉਤੀ ਜੇ ਬੀਦ ਪੁਗੀਆ ਬੁਗ ਸਾਸਿਆ ਹਿਪਾਲ ਖੋ  
 ਹਿ ਤਿਕ ਨ ਚੋਲੈ ਜਾਲੀ ਕਿਵਿ ਸਾਚਿਆ ਰਾਗ ਈ ਕੈ ਵਿਕੁਨੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿਆ ਹੁਦਮ ਰਾ  
 ਈ ਚਲ ਛਾਨ ਕਲਿ ਖਿਆ ਗਾਨਿ ॥ ੧੦ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੈ ਵਨ ਅਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁਨ ਕਿਆ ਜ  
 ਈ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੈ ਵਿਨੀ ਅਹੁਕਮੁਭਿ ਲੈ ਵਿਅਈ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਉਤਸੀਛ ਹੁਕਮੁਲਿ  
 ਖਦਮ ਸੁਖਪਾਈ ਅਗਿਆ ਇਕ ਨ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਬਖ ਸੀ ਸਾਇਕ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਦ ਬੁਵਾਈ  
 ਅਗਿਆ ਨ ਮੈ ਅੰਦਰ ਰਿਸਾ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਬਾਹਿ ਹੁਕਮੁਨ ਕੇ ਵਿਅਨ ਗਹੁਕ ਮੈ ਜੇ ਬੁਝੈ ਤਾਂ ਉ  
 ਮੈ ਕੈ ਨੋਹੈ ॥ ੧੧ ॥ ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੈ ਤਾਂ ਗਾਗ ਵੈ ਕੋ ਦਾ ਕਿ ਸੈ ਤੀ ਸਾਂ ਛਾਗ ਰਾ  
 ਵੈ ਕੁਗੁਹਿ ਵਿਆਈ ਆਚਾਰਿਗ ਗਾਵੈ ਕੈ ਵਿਅਗ ਹੁਖਮੁਵੀਰਗ ਰਿਗ ਵੈ ਕੁ  
 ਜਿ ਕਰੇ ਤਨੁ ਖੇਤੀ ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਜੀ ਅਲੈ ਠਿਰੇ ਦੇ ਰਿਗ ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਜੈ ਸੈ ਦੁ ਗਿਗ ਗਾਵੈ  
 ਕੋ ਦੇ ਸੈ ਗ ਵਗ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਥਨ ਕਥੀ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਥਿਕ ਕਥਿਕ ਸੀ ਕੋ ਰਿਕੋਈ ਵੈ  
 ਦਾ ਦੇ ਲੋਕੇ ਬਕਿਪਾਈ ਜੁ ਗਜੁ ਰੀਤ ਰਿਖਾ ਜੀ ਪਾਗਿ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੁਕਮੁਚਲ ਇਗੁਨਾਨ ਕ  
 ਵੈ ਗ ਸੈ ਵੈ ਪਰ ਵਾਹੁ ॥ ੧੨ ॥ ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਚਿ ਬੁਸਾਚਿ ਨਾਇ ਬੁਖਿਆ ਭਾਉ ਅਪਾਗ ਅਧਾਰੀ ਗ  
 ਰਿਦੇ ਰਿਦੇ ਰਿਦਾ ਤਿਕ ਰਿਦਾ ਤਾਗ ਨਾਨਿ ਰਿਕ ਗੇ ਰਥੀ ਅੰਜਿਤ ਵੈ ਸੈ ਰਥ ਭਾਗ ਮੁਹੈ ਕੋ  
 ਲਾਹਿਵੇ ਲੀ ਅੰਜਿਤ ਸੁਹਿਧ ਮੇਪੁ ਅਗ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੈ ਲਾਸਾਚਿਗ ਵਿਆਈ ਵਿਆਈ  
 ਗਿਆ ਕਮੀਆ ਵੈ ਕਪਤਾਨ ਦ ਗੈ ਮੁਖ ਦ ਆਗ ਪਾਨ ਕੈ ਵੈ ਜਾਹੀ ਅੰਸਕ ਅਪੇ ਸਾਦਿਆ  
 ਗਿਆ ॥ ੧੩ ॥ ਥਾਪੀ ਅਨ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨ ਗਿਆ ਅਪੇ ਅਗੀ ਪਿਨੀ ਰੀਜਨੁ ਸੋਣਿਆ ਜਿਗੀ ਸੇਵਿਆ  
 ਤਿਨੀ ਪਾਇਆ ਮਾਨਾ ਨਾ ਨ ਕਗ ਵੀ ਅੰਗ ਹੈ ਗੁਹੀ ਧਿਧ ਨਾ ਗਵੀ ਅੰਸਣੀ ਅੰਮਰੀ ਅੰਮਰੀ  
 ਅੰਬਾਉ ਦ ਬੁਪਾ ਰਿਗ ਰਿਸੁ ਖੁਖੁ ਪਿਲੈ ਜਾਗ ਇਗ ਰਿਗ ਰਿਗ ਰਿਗ ਵੈ ਰਿਗ



BĀBĀ  
NĀNAK



on the moonlit night of April  
fourteen-sixty-nine  
in the sacred land of the five rivers  
a son was born  
to mother Triptā  
to father Kālū  
the entire universe echoed  
with the music of the spheres  
with the harmony of the planets  
the gods and goddesses  
rejoiced with songs and dance  
the cosmic dance of peace and prosperity  
of absolute unity  
of body and soul  
of earths and heavens  
piercing the fog of ignorance  
of sin and superstition  
of crass and corruption  
the light of love and longings  
spread over the entire universe

the child Nānak  
brought with him  
the hope of humanity  
the hymn of serenity  
the discourse of reason and rationality  
in the Dark Middle Ages of Hindustān !

the sages paid homage  
to the divine child  
the learned bowed  
to the miraculous birth  
the yogis, the sādhus, the seers  
felt the cosmic rhythm  
men and women  
young and old  
longed for his blessings  
for his audience...

there was movement  
in the planets  
there was growth  
in the plants  
there was spring all over  
once again there was life  
there was love  
there was hope of reunion  
of ultimate bliss  
of eternal peace  
beyond faiths and fraternities  
beyond castes and classes  
there was cosmic equilibrium

between light and darkness  
between sun and moon  
between stars and spheres  
between logic and love !

as Nānak grew up  
his father engaged  
a Brahmin and a Muslim scholar  
to acquaint the young lad  
with the classics of his two traditions  
soon Nānak was proficient  
in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic...

he reflected upon  
the wisdom  
the scepticism  
the intellectual incisions  
of the great masters  
of the great prophets  
of the great gurus

and wondered if  
it was enough  
to steer through  
the vicissitudes of life  
in this world of absolute contradictions  
the world of real men and women  
the world of flesh and blood

if there was more to knowledge  
more to reason  
more to meditation and reflection...

the more he learned  
the more he knew  
the more he was anxious  
the more he was uncertain  
about the absolute faith and fortitude  
that was required  
to stay steady and steadfast

in this world of upheavals  
in this world of uncertainties  
in this world of betrayals !

the divine child  
went about his own way  
reflecting and meditating  
on the affairs of the world around  
on the ceremonial limits  
of temples and mosques  
on the rites and rituals  
of the priests and the qāzīs  
he soon realised  
that all was not false  
if all was not true  
he had to sift the pearls  
from the heaps of mud

he had to purify  
the stinking waters  
of centuries of neglect  
he had to constitute  
a new discourse

where one could  
differentiate and discern  
where ideas and images  
could form new conceptual constructs  
delineate new horizons ...

it was a daunting task  
but he had no choice  
his very birth in this world  
his very advent  
in those tumultuous times  
activated his spirit  
his search  
his inquiry  
to the utmost limits  
of the ancient discourses  
of the ancient disputes ...

and in this environment  
of faith and fortitude  
there were miracles all over ...

once he was sleeping under the shade of a tree  
as the sun moved  
so did the tree...

on another occasion  
it was the turn of a king cobra  
to protect the divine child  
from the scorching heat of the Punjab  
for hours, the ferocious beast  
kept his large hood  
over the sublime face  
that radiated with spiritual power...

often he was seen  
in the company of  
the wandering sādhus  
the roaming yogis  
the solitary faqirs  
they discussed and discoursed  
the eternal truths  
the sublime verities  
of spirit and mind  
of this vast universe  
of faiths and fraternities...

it was obvious however  
that something was amiss  
in those overcrowded thoughts  
in those intellectual gymnastics  
in those artificial simplicities  
in those deliberate complexities  
the truth  
if there was one

was beyond those dialectics  
 was beyond those formal horizons !

when Nānak was eighteen  
 following the custom of the country  
 he was married to Sulakhnāī  
 the union gave birth to two sons  
 Sirī Chand and Lakhmī Dās  
 Sirī Chand became a great yogi  
 his disciples continued the lineage for centuries ...

but family was not yet Nānak's mission  
 he spent his time in meditation and reflection  
 Nānak's silence and serenity  
 was getting more and more mysterious  
 as the parents were worried  
 he was sent to his sister to Sultānpur  
 to help his brother-in-law  
 in administration and accounts ...

from one world to another  
 the existence remained the same

the business of administration  
 did not interest Nānak  
 often he got stuck  
 at the number thirteen  
 which in Punjabi also meant "yours"  
 he continued to recite, *tērā, tērā*, thirteen, thirteen

yours, yours !  
 it was all yours, of the Almighty  
 of the Master of all !

Nānak was devoted to his elder sister  
 Bēbē Nānkī  
 a very religious and pious person herself  
 she was the first to recognise  
 the divinity in her younger brother

as a child she played with him  
 she brought him up with love and care  
 she recounted the fairy tales  
 the legends and the myths of the Punjab  
 the mysterious growth of flora and fauna  
 in the vast jungles and the hinterlands

the symbols of boat, the river, the fish  
 the serpent, the peacock, the cuckoo  
 were employed by Nānak  
 later in articulating his reflections  
 on this and the other world  
 the child Nānak was nurtured  
 in the cultural heritage of his ancestors  
 of sages and seers

Bēbē Nānkī adored the simple gestures  
 of her younger brother  
 his fables, his tales  
 his imagination, his vision  
 when the parents admonished him

for his carelessness  
for his other worldly behaviour  
she was always there  
to plead on his behalf  
to defend the divinity of her divine brother  
she admired his reflections, his perceptions  
she appreciated the garb of the faqir  
she followed the transcendental meditations of Nānak

the brother and sister formed a perfect harmony  
of body and soul  
a perfect balance  
of head and heart

of brotherly devotion  
of sisterly affection

as an adult  
Nānak always remembered his sister  
after every Udāsī  
after every pilgrimage  
after every travel in search of truth  
he came to see Bēbē Nānkī  
to pay respect to his elder sister  
to ignite the flame of humanity  
to surcharge the atmosphere of serenity  
to respond to the aspirations of family and friends

to celebrate the ideal and sacred love  
of brother and sister

at home and in his wanderings  
Nānak mixed with the farmer, the trader  
the goldsmith, the carpenter, the weaver, the potter  
the yogi, the sādhu, the seer  
to perceive nobility and sanctity in every profession  
in every caste and creed  
in every hearth and home

he paid respect to the young, to the elderly  
the mothers baking bread  
the girls at their spinning wheels  
the beautiful brides  
the handsome bridegrooms  
the farmers with their ploughs  
the labourers toiling in the fields  
the artisans with their craft

he was at home with the poorest of the poor  
he admired their way of life  
their language, their idioms, their expressions  
he used their simple and affectionate language  
in all his compositions  
he articulated the most complex concepts  
in the idiom of his beloved artisans  
the creators of the most beautiful forms and figures  
the noble artists of his sacred country ...

at dawn Nānak used to go to the river  
for a dip in the pure waters  
of the flowing stream  
to cleanse his body and spirit ...

Nānak was thirty-six years old  
when on the night of full moon  
on the night of soothing light  
he went deep  
into the waters of ḌVēī  
the river of salvation...

the angels flew him to heaven  
where the God Almighty  
the Lord of the Universe  
in the guise of a splendid old man  
with long white beard  
clad in red robes  
was sitting on a golden throne  
with all the gods and goddesses  
in attendance to the Master of Heavens  
the celestial music was vibrating  
every horizon of the universe

the majesty, the grandeur  
of the presence  
of the audience  
transcended all imagination  
Nānak duly bowed before the Eternal Spirit  
he was beckoned to step forward  
to receive nectar  
the milk of the heavenly buffalo  
from the very hands of the Creator  
of all worlds and heavens  
of all stars and spheres...

Nānak was intoxicated  
he had just received the blessings  
the greatest gift of his life  
the Knowledge of all knowledge  
the Secret of all secrets  
he had just acquired  
the most splendid spiritual serenity  
the vision of the most transcendental truth  
the assurance of his mission  
of love and peace  
for all faiths, for all fraternities ...

the good tidings spread to the thirteen worlds  
all gods and goddesses  
all stars and spheres  
sang in unison  
Hail Nānak !  
the Chosen of the Lord of the Universe !

now the entire universe  
was Nānak's temple  
where all gods and goddesses  
all suns and moons  
all stars and spheres  
in perfect harmony  
in perfect rhythm  
of cosmic music  
worshipped his Master ...

there was no Hindu  
no Musalmān

all humanity  
all men and women  
of all races and religions  
were one  
before the One  
and the Unique  
the Creator and Master of the Universe

the Eternal Spirit  
the Ultimate Transcendence  
could not be confined  
within any sects  
within any bricks  
within any boundaries  
temples and mosques  
dresses and diets  
rites and rituals  
must give way  
to the absolute  
to the universal

such was the mission of Nānak  
the discourse of his truth  
of his vision  
of his philosophy !

the child Nānak was transformed into  
Bābā Nānak  
the Sage, the Master, the Guru  
he set out  
to reach the four corners of the world

to spread the truth of his vision  
 to meet the noble souls  
 of all religions, of all races  
 to discuss and discern  
 the problems and pains that inflict the suffering humanity  
 to propose peace and patience  
 discipline and detachment  
 to conquer the evil spirits  
 the temptations of this mundane world  
 to bring harmony  
 between body and spirit  
 between mind and intellect

love, service, serenity  
 peace, harmony, temperance  
 were the kernel themes  
 of his universal message  
 of his transcendental truth !

Bābā Nānak  
 and Mardānā, his companion  
 the musician with his melodious Rabāb  
 set out to travel and to witness  
 the vicissitudes of this world ...

the young Mardānā was always hungry  
 for the pleasures of body and flesh  
 Bābā Nānak always  
 counselled patience and perseverance  
 travelling through villages and wilderness

Mardānā had his wishes fulfilled  
his greed often overwhelmed him

Mardānā would collect alms and offerings  
Bābā would insist on  
throwing away all unnecessary baggage  
Mardānā would feel lonely and frightened  
in the savage jungles  
Bābā would consider the wilderness  
as the dwelling of the Lord  
the disciple and the Guru  
presented the dialectics  
of flesh and spirit  
the mediation continued  
throughout their life !

in one of the sorties  
Mardānā could stand no more  
he was so hungry  
he refused to follow the Master  
in the ferocious jungles  
the Guru asked him to eat  
the fruits of a wild plant  
the berries were so delicious  
Mardānā kept some for later crises

one day taken over by his usual hunger  
he bit into the forbidden fruit  
and fell unconscious  
the Guru had transformed

the poisonous plant into delicious food  
only once to quench  
the thirst and hunger of Mardānā  
he had to be patient

patience is sweet  
greed is poison  
the Bābā continued  
with his eternal discourse !

while Mardānā could not resist  
the riches of the world  
the Bābā practiced austerities in the jungle  
he ate wild fruits  
and tasted sand and hot winds  
for days he meditated  
in absolute isolation  
in the company of his Master  
the Lord of the Universe  
under the canopy of the stars  
listening to the sublime music  
of the innermost rhythm  
of the steady mind  
of the resolution of all conflicts  
achieving a harmony and balance  
of absolute beauty  
of absolute truth !

in April on the occasion of Baisākhī  
Bābā Nānak and Mardānā  
arrived on the banks of the Ganges

the devotees were taking the holy bath  
 throwing water to the East  
 towards the rays of the sun  
 to appease and worship their ancestors ...

Bābā Nānak went down  
 bathed and began to throw water  
 to the West, towards his home  
 towards his farmland

this ceremonial contradiction  
 this religious absurdity  
 infuriated the devotees  
 who considered it sacrilege  
 to go against the age old custom  
 and asked Bābā to stop  
 this most irreligious act  
 of changing the holy directions

Bābā Nānak answered by a counter-argument  
 why the devotees were throwing water to the East  
 how can it reach millions of miles  
 where in heaven were their ancestors  
 when it could not reach  
 a few hundred miles to his fields in the West !

on another occasion  
 he was asked to pray along with another devotee  
 after the prayer was over  
 the Bābā questioned the devotee  
 what was he doing during the prayer

instead of concentrating on meditation  
on the transcendental spirit  
of the Lord of the Universe  
he was selling oil in Kabul  
he was all the time thinking  
of his business affairs  
of his loss and profit  
of his material needs

there is no prayer  
no religious, pious act  
if there is no concentration  
the mind and body  
must be emptied of all frivolities  
of all that is Other  
that is foreign to spiritual purity  
mere ceremonial prayer is of no use  
it is hypocritical  
it is a false path  
it leads nowhere !

once the Bābā was offered a delicious meal  
but he refused to eat  
it was impure, he said  
it was full of dirt and filth

the host could not believe such words  
such an utterance  
that went against all the religious purities  
the meal was prepared

with all the ceremonial precautions  
 all the taboos of caste and class  
 Bābā declared it impure  
 it was prepared by an impure person  
 by a corrupt master  
 who was engaged in evil deeds  
 who looted the poor  
 who suppressed the others  
 material gains were his only concerns

the purity of the meal  
 does not lie in the ceremonial purities  
 purity is honesty  
 purity is devotion  
 purity is love and care of the others  
 purity is the purity of the mind  
 of the soul  
 where inner harmony and love  
 are in tune with each other  
 where hatred, cruelty, corruption  
 are exiled to the other world  
 the world of the evil doers !

in one of the encounters  
 the Bābā was asked  
 how does one reach the Almighty ?  
 how does one acquire salvation ?  
 some practice extreme austerities  
 others indulge in every crass  
 some smear their bodies with ashes  
 others lie on sharp nails

some stay in water for days  
others never bathe  
some wear heavy clothes in summer  
others stay naked even in winter  
some have their heads shaven  
others wear their hair long  
some never leave their abode  
others never stay home  
some eat certain foods to propitiate their gods  
others avoid the forbidden flesh and fruits  
some don't eat cows  
others don't eat pigs  
some eat what is grown above the ground  
others eat only what grows underground  
some eat only on certain days  
others pretend not to eat at all  
even the days and nights  
are divided into holy and unholy  
there are auspicious hours  
and there are dark days  
the heads of humanity seem to be spinning  
in this absolute confusion

what is the right path ?  
O Bābā, the divine Master !

there is no right or wrong path  
all paths lead to the Lord  
austerities of the body lead nowhere  
love, service, serenity  
bring harmony and union

cleanse yourself of all envy  
of all greed and pride  
listen to the inner music  
have faith in His bounty  
only He who has created this universe  
can differentiate and discern  
the false from the true  
the right from the wrong  
in His will is every path !

normally we follow, O Mardānā  
our customs and conventions  
traditions and orders  
they are the repository  
of centuries of experience and wisdom  
of sages, of elders

but they are not rigid  
they are not sacred  
this universe is not stationary  
since millions of years  
millions of stars and planets  
earths and heavens  
have been in movement  
there is continuity  
but there is also change  
our cultures and concepts  
must also follow  
this law of evolution  
the youth must pay respect to the elders  
the elders must pay attention  
to the ambitions of the youth

when the priests, the qazis, the jathedars  
lay down strict rules  
of hearths and homes  
of diets and dresses  
when they insist  
on specific ideologies  
on specific discourses of religions and rituals  
it does not work  
it has never worked  
differences and dissents  
must be resolved  
through discussions and debates  
through love and affection  
through respect for the other

the transcendental truth  
if there is one  
is the truth of hearts and harmony  
of tolerance and temperance  
of equality and fraternity !

there are too many questions  
there are too many confusions  
my dear Mardānā  
the world is rife with divisions and dissents  
the jihāds and the crusades  
are the order of the day  
spreading hatred and enmity  
the rulers have no regard for their subjects  
the subjects have no faith in their masters

it is Kaliyug  
the Dark Age of ignorance and superstition  
where men are suppressed  
where women are ill treated  
where children are bewildered  
who know not what to do  
what to follow

o dear friend  
tune your melodious Rabāb  
with the hymn of love and longings  
with the music of service and serenity  
let us proclaim the Age of Enlightenment  
the age of reason and rationality  
the age of friendship and brotherhood  
the age of dignity and freedom  
let us proclaim the mission  
that I was charged with  
by the Lord of the Universe  
by the Creator of all humanity !



# JAPUJĪ



## JAPUJĪ

let us meditate on  
the One  
the Eternal  
the True  
the Creator  
beyond fear or faction  
beyond time or space  
beyond being or becoming  
perceived by the grace of the Guru

True in the beginning  
True through the ages  
True in the present  
Nānak, True, He will ever be !

His truth is beyond all reflection  
beyond all silences and abstentions  
His perception is beyond all hunger and thirst  
beyond all projections and pretensions

how can we arrive at His truth ?  
how can this wall of ignorance be removed ?  
Nānak, one must live in His will  
in His nature, in His order ! (1)

in His will  
are created forms  
in His will  
are life and grandeur  
nobility and servility are due to Him  
there are some who are graced  
and other who suffer for ever

in His will  
is every one  
beyond it  
there is none  
Nānak, he who comprehends His will brags not ! (2)

some sing His praise for His omniscience  
and some celebrate His plenitude  
some sing His praise for His noble deeds  
and some celebrate His wisdom and thought  
some sing His praise for His dispensation and  
destruction  
and some celebrate His creation and consumption  
some sing His praise, for He is inaccessible  
and some celebrate His eternal presence  
there is no limit to His manifestation  
there are millions who sing  
and millions who describe Him  
He is the eternal benevolence  
the devotees change from place to place  
through the ages, He has sustained all  
Nānak, all moves depend upon His will  
and all life follows His wondrous disposition ! (3)

the righteous Lord  
who dwells in Truth  
love is His language of meditation,  
His benevolence, His benediction

what can we offer in His majestic audience ?  
words of love and affection  
can alone adorn His omniscience  
in the serenity of the dawn  
are offered the hymns of devotion

His grace endows us with form  
His benevolence leads to eternal salvation  
Nānak, this is the righteous path of truth  
and transcendence ! (4)

beyond construction or constitution  
 in His will is His projection, His perception  
 His devotee is bestowed with His benevolence  
 Nānak, she vibrates with His music  
 with His magnificence

let us sing and listen  
 and tune in the melody of love  
 let us shed our miseries  
 and enter the house of bliss

with the grace of the Guru  
 we hear music  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 we acquire knowledge

the Guru is all pervasive  
 the Guru is Ishvar  
 the Guru is Gorakh, Brahma  
 the Guru is Pārvatī Māī

even if I knew  
 I cannot describe  
 words and thoughts  
 do not coincide

the Guru has revealed the mystery of the One  
 on whom depend all dispensation  
 I must never forget His manifestation ! (5)

in His will are sacred baths  
beyond His will are all farce  
in His will is all creation  
beyond His will there is no salvation

if in the will of the Guru  
a Sikh wavers not  
there are pearls and diamonds  
in his wisdom and thought

the Guru has revealed the mystery of the One  
on whom depend all dispensation  
I must never forget His manifestation ! (6)

if one lives for four ages  
and extends it to tenfold  
if he is known in nine regions  
and all follow his hold  
if he has a glorious name  
and is famous all over

but if he is fallen from His grace  
he is no more  
he is the lowest of the lowest  
a beast, a bastion of all blames

Nānak, He transforms the simplest  
into the most talented  
and the talented reach the heights of sublimation  
but there is none  
who can add to His excellence, His formation ! (7)

listen in for the truth  
of sidh, pīr, sur, nāth

listen in for the truth  
of the earth, the bull and the sky  
the regions, the spheres and the underworld  
listen in to transcend Time and Death

Nānak, the listeners ever in tune with Him  
listen in to eradicate all misery and sin ! (8)

listen in for the truth  
of Ishvar, Brahma and Indira  
listen in to transform sinners into singers

listen in to comprehend  
His mysteries and manners  
listen in to reach the innermost depths of knowledge

Nānak, the listeners are ever in tune with Him  
listen in to eradicate all misery and sin ! (9)

listen in for truth  
temperance and knowledge  
listen in for divine reflection  
and perception  
listen in for steady concentration  
and convention

Nānak, the listeners are ever in tune with Him  
listen in to eradicate all misery and sin ! (10)

listen in for the revelation of truth  
listen in to acquire the state of  
sheikh, pīr, pātshāh

listen in to be on the righteous coarse  
listen in to discern His sublime discourse

Nānak, the listeners are ever in tune with Him  
listen in to eradicate all misery and sin ! (11)

believe in to be in a state of transcendence  
a state beyond all pretence

no prayer, no pen, no scribe  
can delineate the state of His omniscience

believe in is a state of absolute purity  
only a believer can achieve that serenity ! (12)

believe in to crystallise your perception  
believe in to apprehend the entire universe

believe in to surmount all illusions  
believe in that Death may not demand submission

believe in is a state of absolute purity  
only a believer can achieve that serenity ! (13)

believe in to lead the righteous path  
believe in to step in with honour and glory

believe in to follow the straight and the narrow  
believe in to discern His truth and transcendence

believe in is a state of absolute purity  
only a believer can achieve that serenity ! (14)

believe in to reach the door of salvation  
believe in for all preservation

believe in for the harmony of the Guru and the Sikh  
Nānak, believe in to escape all dependence

believe in is a state of absolute purity  
only a believer can achieve that serenity ! (15)

the listeners, the believers, the elders  
 are honoured in His audience  
 they are accepted and counted  
 they embellish the company of the kings  
 they are ever tuned to the Word of the Guru  
 but their words and thoughts do not coincide  
 His infinite deeds are beyond their mind

the bull of Dharma, the son of dispensation  
 patiently and steadily follows the Order  
 one can never estimate the weight on the bull  
 there is one earth after another

there is no end to His universe  
 none can support His enormous pressure

the races, the castes, the colours are infinite  
 and beyond all description  
 only he who attempts realises their extension

who can fathom  
 His energy, His form, His compassion  
 His one Word led to infinite expansion  
 to the flow of endless waters

His wondrous nature is beyond all reflection  
 beyond any attempt at comprehension  
 what He wills is the righteous path  
 He is the eternal Nirankār ! (16)

infinite are the meditations  
and infinite are the devotions  
infinite are the rituals  
and infinite are their recitations  
infinite are the yogis  
and infinite are their renunciations  
infinite are the devotees  
and infinite are the thinkers  
infinite are the seekers of truth  
and infinite are the sages  
infinite are the gallant warriors  
and infinite are those who face danger and death  
infinite meditate in silence  
and infinite sit in eternal contemplation

His wondrous nature is beyond all reflection  
beyond every attempt at comprehension  
what He wills is the righteous path  
He is the eternal Nirankār ! (17)

infinite are the fools  
who live in the darkest recesses  
infinite are the thieves  
who loot and plunder  
and infinite are those  
who remain always under  
infinite are the criminals  
who kill and murder  
infinite are the sinners  
who sin and suffer  
and infinite are those  
who live in dirt and squalor  
infinite are involved in stinking deeds  
and infinite are those  
who indulge in rage and rancour  
thus reflects Nānak on the affairs of this world

His wondrous nature is beyond all reflection  
beyond every attempt at comprehension  
what He wills is the righteous path  
He is the eternal Nirankār ! (18)

infinite are the names  
and infinite are the places  
infinite are the regions and spheres  
they are all beyond the reach of the seers

with words we compose music  
we sing cosmic hymns  
with words we acquire knowledge  
we articulate our perceptions  
with words we communicate  
we arrive at divine projections  
with words we establish eternal unions  
we present our reflections

in His Word is every creation  
in His Word is every relation  
all acts follow His dictate  
His Word saturates every state

His wondrous nature is beyond all reflection  
beyond every attempt at comprehension  
what He wills is the righteous path  
He is the eternal Nirankār ! (19)

hands, feet and body  
drenched in dirt  
are cleansed with water  
and soiled clothes  
are washed with soap  
but only meditation cleanses the stinking sinner  
sin and service leave their traces for ever  
as you sow  
so do you reap  
Nānak, as He wills  
so is there advent and end ! (20)

rituals and renunciations  
charities and recitations  
are only outer manifestations  
but listening and believing

devotion and love  
cleanse the inner self

before Thy benevolence and beatitude  
I can only offer my servitude

bereft of Thy blessing  
there is no devotion, no meditation

Thou art the Word  
 Thou art the Utterance  
 Thou art the Creation  
 the universe is an expression  
 of Thy beatitude and benediction

who knows the time, the hour  
 the day, the week  
 the season, the month  
 when it all came to be

the Brahmins have not located the time in the Puranas  
 the qāzīs have not mentioned the hour in the Qurā'n  
 the yogis know not the day  
 the week, the season, the month  
 only the Creator knows the hour of His creation  
 how can I discern and discourse  
 divide and describe  
 Nānak, each claims to be the wisest of the scribes

the Lord is great  
 as He wills  
 so it is done  
 Nānak, he who pretends to know  
 is lost in the row ! (21)

there are millions of underworlds  
and no count of skies  
the Vedas searched in vain  
and came to the same refrain  
some have counted eighteen thousand  
some more  
there can be no count  
there can only be delusions  
Nānak, He alone can discern His own dimensions !  
(22)

descriptions and discourses  
lead not to knowledge  
rivers and streams get lost in the ocean  
reflections and perceptions do not attain His  
projections

a Sultān with sway over seven seas  
and mountains of gold  
compares not with the smallest insect  
who forgets not his Lord ! (23)

there is no limit to His description, His discourse  
there is no limit to His deeds, His dispensation  
there is no limit to His perception, His projection  
there is no limit to His reflection, His selection  
there is no limit to His form  
there is no beginning, no norm

many have attempted to reach His limits  
they are all lost in His infinite  
His form is beyond all perception  
beyond all count and conception

the great Lord resides at higher planes  
greater is His name  
only He who rises to His level can perceive Him  
He alone knows His abode  
Nānak, all grace is within His mode ! (24)

His compassion is beyond all description  
His generosity is beyond all prescription

many a gallant warrior is at His door  
one cannot count the seekers' rows  
many are stuck in their ambitious muck

there are many who find and forget  
and there are fools who never regret  
there are the ones whose lot is  
hunger, thirst and misfortune  
this too is within His will and boon

fetters and freedom are in His will  
none can alter His order  
he who goes beyond His will  
he alone suffers His mill  
He knows what is in store  
others can say no more  
Nānak, he is made the King of kings  
who is in tune with Him and sings ! (25)

precious are the virtues  
and precious is their reception  
precious are the traders  
and precious is their conception  
precious things are received  
and precious is their consumption  
precious is His love  
and precious is His reflection

precious is the order  
and precious is the court  
precious is the measure  
and precious is its treasure  
precious is His compassion  
and precious is His grace  
precious are His deeds  
and precious are His dictates

it is beyond all price  
it is beyond all estimation  
one can only realise it in meditation

there are Vedas and Puranas  
there are infinite readings and discourses  
there are Brahma, Indra, Gopi and Govind  
but none can reach Him

there are Ishvar and siddhas  
there are many buddhas  
demons and gods  
noblemen and sages  
all describe His images

many attempt to perceive Him  
all leave in despair  
one group follows another  
but none is able to repair

as He wills, so it is done  
Nānak, He alone knows His truth  
man tries in vain  
fool of fools, insane ! (26)

imagine the wondrous abode  
where the protector of all resides  
where the musicians sing  
where the hymns vibrate  
where different tunes adore His state

all sing Thy praise  
the air, the water, the fire  
Dharamraj in His palace  
with Chitra and Gupta  
the keepers of deeds and duties

there are, Ishvar, Brahma, Devi  
all sing in unison  
Indra on his throne  
gods in His attendance  
the siddhas in meditation  
the sages in deep thought  
the disciples, the ascetics  
the seekers of truth  
and the brave warriors  
all are tuned to the same hymn

the Brahmins, the rishis  
throughout the ages sing along  
the maidens fair  
and the creatures of the underworld  
join the chorus

the most precious  
 the sixty-eight pilgrimages  
 the valiant soldiers  
 in the four corners of the universe  
 in all spheres and centres  
 sing Thy praise

they alone can sing  
 who follow Thy will  
 Thy devotees are ever in tune  
 there are so many others  
 one can count not  
 Nānak, they all enjoy the same boon

He is the everlasting truth  
 the true Lord  
 truth is His designation

He is  
 He will ever be  
 the Creator of the universe  
 as He wills  
 so it is done  
 none dare oppose Him  
 the King of kings  
 Nānak, in His will are all things ! (27)

let your earrings be of patience  
your begging bowl of hard work  
and your ashes of meditation

the fear of death  
your rags  
the purity of mind  
your yogic order  
and faith in Him  
your staff of a pilgrim

in every class  
in every creed  
the victory over mind  
is the victory in deed

salutations to the highest  
whose form is sublime  
who has no beginning, no end  
who is present through the ages ! (28)

with truth and transcendence  
the cosmic music vibrates in the universe

the austerities, the miracles  
are all wanton waste  
the naths, the siddhas  
must follow His dictate  
as He wills  
so is union and separation  
it all depends upon deeds and devotion  
salutation to the Highest  
whose form is sublime  
who has no beginning, no end  
who is present through the ages ! (29)

from one mother is born the order of the universe  
with three disciples  
the creator, the protector, the destroyer

as He wills  
so it is realised  
all follow His command  
His vision surveys all  
yet He is invisible  
it is a strange spectacle

salutations to the Highest  
whose form is sublime  
who has no beginning, no end  
who is present through the ages ! (30)

in every cosmos is His abode  
in all spheres there is even mode

the Creator transcends His creation  
Nānak, His truth saturates every action

salutations to the Highest  
whose form is sublime  
who has no beginning, no end  
who is present through the ages ! (31)

if there are millions of tongues  
vibrating His name  
there will be one eternal verse  
of the Lord of the universe

many a step leads to His path  
but only a few reach His abode  
the tales of heaven  
lure many a lowly rogue  
Nānak, His grace alone can lead us there  
duplicities and divisions  
are dissolved in His divine discourse! (32)

one cannot force  
word or silence  
request or receiving

one cannot force  
thought or perception  
system or salvation

Nānak, He alone has the will  
to frame and force  
as He desires  
so it is ordained ! (33)

seasons, periods, nights and days  
wind, water, fire and earth  
form the temple of His gaze  
there are all kinds of colour and life  
there are infinite names

with deeds and devotion  
the truth of the True prevails  
and the five chosen shine

the false and the true are differentiated  
Nānak, thus is His judgement enunciated ! (34)

in Dharam Khāḍ there are deeds and devotions  
let us describe the Gyan Khāḍ  
where infinite are the winds, waters, fires  
and infinite are the Krishnas and Maheshas  
infinite are the Brahmins  
and infinite are the forms, colours, costumes  
infinite are the spheres of deeds  
and infinite are the words of wisdom  
infinite are the Indras, suns and moons  
and infinite are the spheres and regions  
infinite are the siddhās, buddhas, naths  
and infinite are the gods and goddesses  
infinite are the ways, words  
infinite are those who know  
and infinite are those who follow  
Nānak, there is no end to the devotees rows ! (35)

knowledge is supreme in Gyan Khāḍ  
there are music, spectacles and celebrations

form reigns in Sarm Khāḍ  
there are created the most beautiful curves  
whose forms one can articulate not  
all attempts lead to deception  
there are formed  
consciousness, intelligence and reflection

in this cosmic domain  
the suras and the siddhas  
acquire wisdom and perception ! (36)

only deeds matter in Karm Khād  
where the warriors and the valiant heroes dwell  
who are swayed by His grace, by His benevolence  
where the devotees are immersed in His devotion  
whose forms are beyond any perception  
they die not, nor are they deceived  
they resonate with His grace  
in beatitude, they enjoy His sublime gaze

the formless dwells in Sach khād  
radiating grace and benediction  
there are infinite regions and spheres  
they are all beyond the reach of the seers  
there is light, there is form  
as He wills, so is His norm

there is vision  
there is growth  
there is reflection  
Nānak, its articulation is beyond all perception ! (37)

discipline is the oven  
and patience is the goldsmith  
with the hammer of knowledge  
He strikes on the plate of intelligence  
with the bellows of fear  
and the fire of faith  
from the pot of love  
flows the nectar of reflection  
in the atelier of Truth  
is formed the True Word

this is given to those  
who are blessed  
Nānak, He is ever gracious ! (38)

air is the Guru  
water, the father  
and, earth is our mother

in the nursing hands  
of day and night  
plays the whole world

He watches every good and bad deed  
as we act, so do we reap

those who spend their lives  
in deep thought and meditation  
Nānak, they radiate with glory  
and enjoy eternal salvation !

this was Japuji  
meditations on God and His universe  
the affairs of this and the other world  
Mardānā wanted to know  
if it was always so  
when did this universe come to be  
how all this happened ?  
how things began ?  
how they turned the way they are ?

the Bābā was always there  
to answer his disciple's questions  
to satisfy his inquisitive nature

no, he said, it was all different  
long, long ago  
millions of years ago  
it was all dark ...

*arbad narbad dhūdhūkārā  
 dharan na gagan nā hukam apārā  
 na din raiṇ na chand na sūraj  
 sun smādh lagāēdā  
 khāṇī na bāṇī pauṇ na pāṇī  
 opat khāpat na āwan̄ jāṇī  
 khand patāl sapat nahī sāgar  
 nadī na nīr wahāēdā  
 na tad surg macch piālā  
 dozak bhist nahī khai kālā  
 nark surg nahī jaman̄ marnā  
 na ko āē na jāēdā ...*

long, long ago  
 millions of years ago  
 it was all dark  
 all silent and sombre  
 there was no earth, no sky  
 only the Being of the Lord prevailed everywhere  
 there was no day, no night  
 no sun, no moon  
 only the Almighty Lord immersed in His light  
 there was no life, no language  
 no regions, no air, no water  
 there was neither birth nor death  
 none came, none left  
 there were neither planets nor underworlds  
 neither rivers nor oceans nor streams of water  
 there were neither hells nor heavens  
 neither growth nor decay

neither rise nor fall  
 nor the eternal cycle of birth and death  
 there was neither Brahma nor Bishan nor Mahesh  
 there was none other than the sovereign Lord Himself  
 there were neither men nor women  
 neither castes nor creeds  
 neither sins nor sorrows  
 there were neither sanyasis nor renunciants  
 neither siddhas nor seers  
 there were neither yogis nor jangams  
 nor any claim to be the Nath of all of them  
 there was neither fasting nor penance  
 neither austerities nor abstentions  
 none to rival the eternal Lord

there were neither lovely maids nor Krishnas  
 neither cows nor shepherds  
 there was neither the magical farce  
 nor the futile deceptions  
 there were neither ceremonies nor deceiving rituals  
 neither illusions nor delusions

there was neither any caste nor any creed  
 neither any indulgence  
 nor the ruthless wrath of the eternal Time  
 there was neither praise nor jealousy  
 neither life nor breath  
 there was neither Gorakh nor Machhandar  
 neither endless disputes nor futile discussions  
 neither any camouflage nor deliberate deceptions  
 there were neither Brahmins nor khatri  
 neither gods nor temples

neither cows nor the magical rituals  
 neither elaborate ceremonies nor sacrifices

there were neither pilgrimages nor sacred baths  
 neither mullahs nor qāzīs  
 neither sheikhs nor hājīs

there were neither subjects nor kings  
 neither prides nor humiliations

there were neither infatuations nor false devotions  
 neither bewildered minds nor illusions  
 there were neither friends nor enemies  
 neither the blood of the mother nor the sperm of the father  
 there was but one sovereign Lord  
 who imbibed in Himself all truth and transcendence

there were neither Vedas nor Qurā'ns  
 neither Smritis nor Shastras  
 neither readers nor interpreters

there was no sun to rise, to set  
 the sublime Lord imbibed in Himself  
 all manifestation, all immanence  
 and when He willed  
 it all came to be  
 in all its mysteries and extensions  
 the universe appeared in all regions and spheres  
 Brahma, Bishan and Mahesh came into existence  
 and with them all the snares of māyā

rare were those who discerned the Word of the Lord  
 who perceived the will of the Sovereign  
 who reflected upon His manifestation  
 in all regions, in all planets  
 who meditated upon His extensions

Nānak, those who discern His truth  
 who vibrate with His truth  
 they are blessed by the Lord  
 they live in His truth  
 they find His sublime refuge !

and now my dear Mardānā  
 every thing is changed  
 it is Kaliyug  
 the Dark Age of Hindustān  
 corruption and cruelty  
 are the order of the day  
 charity is given  
 from the looted wealth  
 the gurus go to the houses of the disciples

women follow men only for their wealth  
 they bother not where they go  
 with whom they sleep  
 the Vedas are forgotten  
 only selfish motives prevail

the qāzī sits in judgement  
 he rolls his sacred beads

and declares justice in favour  
of the one who bribes him

the hindu has forgotten his sacred books  
his courtyard is washed clean  
but his heart is polluted

the yogi lives with his women  
with his children running around  
he has smeared his face with ashes  
and his head with dust  
all this for a few loaves of bread

the temples, the mosques, the guru dwārās  
have become the veritable dens of corruption  
the dwelling places of evil spirits  
of demons, of devils...

this sacred land of rishis and bhaktas  
of Qurā'ns and Puranas  
of noble men and women  
of the devotees of the Lord  
is invaded by the foreign hoards  
who should be blamed ?

the Bābā was in pain to describe this absolute cruelty  
 this absolute massacre  
 he asked his Master ...

*khurāsān khasmānā kīā Hindustān darāeā  
 āpē dos na deī kartā jam kar mughal charāeā  
 ētī mār pāī kurlāne tē kī dard na āeā  
 jē saktā saktē ko mārē ta man ros na hoī  
 saktā sīh mārē pe waggē khāmē sā pursāī*

if a powerful warrior fights with another  
 it can be understood  
 it can be permitted  
 but when the terrible armies crush  
 the meek and the humble  
 where should one go ?  
 with whom one should plead ?  
 it is all in His will  
 where should one turn to ?...

and in utter distress  
 he meditated  
 where are the mansions and horses ?  
 the warriors with swords and spears ?  
 the luxuries of plenty and prosperity ?  
 where are all the beauties and beds ?  
 where are all the attendants ?

Bābā was sure  
all wealth is acquired by evil deeds  
death destroys all ambitions  
in His will is every act  
when Bābar invaded Hindustān  
all prayers were lost  
all ceremonies were doomed  
all charms were of no avail  
no invader went blind  
no miracle happened  
Mughals and Pathans fought pitched battles  
the entire land was drenched in blood  
His will prevailed  
and death took its toll  
the veils of many a woman were torn  
and several lost their husbands  
there was no let up  
His Order transcended all religions and rituals...

it is the age of the dagger  
of the butcher kings  
religion has vanished  
the dark night of falsehood  
is spread all over  
the moon of truth  
is under the clouds of corruption...

cheating and deceiving  
are the order of the day  
the kings, the denizens, the world at large  
are all stuck in the mire of deception

the gold, the silver, the pearls  
are only illusions  
so are our bodies, our clothes, our forms  
men and women deceive each other  
love and friendship  
are replaced by fraud and insincerity...

Bābā continued to articulate  
the vanity of the ignorant  
the verity of the universe  
of men and women  
of hearts and hearths  
in a long composition in Sirī Rāg  
he meditated on the complexities of life  
on the mysteries of the divine  
on the frivolities of human nature...































# SIRĪ RĀG



## SIRĪ RĀG

palaces studded with diamonds and pearls  
lit with the most beautiful lamps  
perfumed with the sweetest fragrance  
are all illusions, all distractions  
in His meditation and reflection

in separation  
my heart aches  
my body burns  
bereft of the union with my Guru  
there is no refuge, no support

the splendour of diamonds and pearls  
the brightness of luxurious beds and beautiful women  
lust and longings  
indulgence and infatuation are all illusions  
all distractions  
in His meditation and reflection

endowed with all the miracles and magic  
hidden in the eternal depths  
these supernatural powers  
are all illusions  
all distractions  
in His meditation and reflection

inflated in the pride of a Sultān  
with armies and populace to follow  
Nānak, such haughty positions  
are all illusions  
all distractions  
in His meditation and reflection ! (1)

if I live for millions of years  
sustained by air and water  
if I hide myself in the darkest caves  
where sun and moon never appear  
I cannot attain Thee  
without Thy grace, compassion and comprehension

the true Lord transcends all forms  
His discourse is above all norms

if I torture my body with nails  
cut my limbs with sharp knives  
grind myself in burning wheels  
I cannot attain Thee  
without Thy grace, compassion and comprehension

if I fly like a bird in the vast spaces  
remain hidden from every gaze  
without eating or drinking for days  
I cannot attain Thee  
without Thy grace, compassion and comprehension

if I have thousands of reams of paper  
unlimited ink and a fluent pen  
to describe and discern my Lord  
I cannot attain Thee  
without Thy grace, compassion and comprehension !  
(2)

all steps leave their traces  
our speech, our thoughts  
our dreams, our discourses  
our behaviour, our breathing  
Bābā, all lead to the eternal illusion  
the blind do not see the truth  
they are doomed for ever  
within life and death  
time is eternal  
the mourners do not help the sinner  
only the good deeds transcend this eternity

all attempt to comprehend the incomprehensible  
His discourse is beyond all discernment  
His truth is beyond all description

only the true Lord is eternal  
the rest is all ephemeral

blessed are the poorest of the poor  
Nānak resides with them  
he lives their life  
and bothers not about others  
God's grace protects these humble creatures ! (3)

greed is the dog  
deception, the scavenger  
the dishonest, the corrupt  
devour rotten corpses  
jealousy and hatred leave bad taste  
and anger burns our hearts and hearths

indulging in flattery and false glory  
the divine path is obliterated

Bābā, those who meditate and reflect  
are honoured in His audience  
and the good deeds are rewarded

evil ferments evil  
the sinner is drenched in his sins  
the being is doomed in the lust  
for gold and silver  
for wealth and women  
for horses and chariots

the discourse that leads to His perception  
is the discourse reflected  
falsity and deception  
are doomed for ever  
as He wills  
so it is accepted  
the rest is lost and infected  
all honour, all treasure  
are bestowed on those  
who live in His will  
in His order

Nānak, they are rich and happy  
they need no worldly goods  
no false baggage  
they are honoured, they are respected  
others are lost in the wilderness ! (4)

there are those who indulge  
in all kinds of intoxicants  
they lose all senses  
all measures of truth  
all accounts of life and death

and Nānak, there are others  
who are blessed by the Lord  
who deal in truth  
who recognise the eternal verity  
who serve the Almighty  
who are honoured in His audience

the wine of truth is beyond all crass  
it is transparent and transcendental  
the devotee is beholden to those  
who are blessed with His truth  
who live in His truth

those who meditate on His Name  
on His Form and Concept  
they breathe fresh air  
they bathe in pure waters

their life is sacred  
their happiness is sublime

how can one forget that Master  
on whom depend all dispensation ?  
every thing else is impure, farce  
in His will is every truth, every perception ! (5)

burn your desires  
and comprehend and converse  
to discourse on the truth of the Lord  
to discern His sublimity, His serenity

Bābā, let devotion be your pen  
and your heart, your scribe  
to discern and delineate His universe  
to present your credentials in His audience

where there is reflection  
there is serenity  
where the mind is steady  
and the heart follows the divine rhythm

there is sublimity  
there is birth  
there is death  
there is being  
there is becoming

there are those with honoured names  
and there are others  
who are wretched for ever

at the end they are all one  
without class or creed  
without wealth or greed

my being is scared  
afraid of the unknown

Nānak, the sultāns and the sardārs  
all submit to the final judgement  
all are subjected to the eternal ferment ! (6)

in His will are all sweets, all tastes  
in His meditation are all rhythms, all hymns  
in His reflection are all projections, all perceptions  
every other projection is bitter, beaten  
that corrupts minds  
that pollutes souls

in His devotion  
is every dress, every splendour  
in His benediction  
is every grandeur  
in His blessing  
is every decoration  
every other dress is deception  
that corrupts minds  
that pollutes souls

in His path  
are all horses, all chariots  
all silver, all gold  
all arrows, all spears  
all the insignia of royalty

every other path  
every other chariot  
corrupts minds, pollutes souls

in His peace is every peace  
in His bliss is every bliss

Nānak, the true Lord transcends all norms  
every other form is illusion, depression and deception  
that corrupts minds  
that pollutes souls ! (7)

rituals and riches  
 reflections and discourses  
 concepts and conventions  
 pilgrimages and purities  
 depend upon His will, His order

Bābā, empty logic leads nowhere  
 from absurd intelligence emerges ignorance  
 those who command respect  
 with force and wealth  
 those who perform miracles  
 with austerities and abstinence  
 are not honoured in His audience

but those who live in His will  
 who meditate and reflect  
 who are merged in His being  
 in His spirit  
 are the beloved of the Lord  
 they live in His eternal order

when the body decays  
 when all discourses are silent  
 when all senses are lost  
 the being withers  
 Nānak, the world is shattered  
 the universe is pushed into oblivion ! (8)

the talented exercises her talent  
the foolish spreads her ignorance  
only truth and temperance lead to His bliss  
to His benediction  
there is no boat, no oars  
how can I cross the river of separation  
to reach my Lord, my eternal Love ?

my Lord is splendid on His throne  
He is generous  
His abode is beautiful  
adorned with diamonds and pearls  
there are infinite horizons  
how can I attain their heights ?

with the benediction of the Guru  
we acquire the boat, the oars  
to cross the river  
to reach the Lord

the Guru is the ocean of truth  
the universe of peace  
the world of serenity  
Nānak, with the blessings of the Guru  
one attains the sublime horizon ! (9)

come sisters  
let us talk about our Lord  
of His virtues and our ignorance  
of His love and our indulgence  
the whole world is led by Him  
it is the mystery of His Word  
the secret of the divine discourse

ask the brides  
how they adored their loves ?  
how they practiced patience and service ?  
how they remained steady and sincere ?

the Guru's discourse helps us all  
the Lord is supreme  
His nature is a wonder  
His creation is a miracle  
His form is infinite  
His abode is splendid  
Nānak, merged in truth and love  
the true Lord leads to the eternal truth  
to the divine verity ! (10)

thank God I am saved  
 pride hath given way to humility  
 and the demons have been subdued  
 desires and lust have taken leave  
 the heavenly bliss has descended  
 and truth prevails every where  
 fear is replaced by love  
 and the heart follows the rhythm of the divine Word

there are so many seekers  
 so many destitutes  
 but there is one universal bounty  
 whose blessings bring peace  
 whose bliss brings serenity

this world is a dream  
 in a moment this spectacle is over  
 union and separation are in His hands, in His will  
 as He wishes, so it is done  
 it is all in His will, in His order  
 Nānak, the Guru bestows truth and tranquillity  
 with the blessing of the true Lord  
 there is serenity, there is sublimity ! (11)

the devotees merge in the Lord  
 as different elements in a pot  
 the burning desire of union glows for ever  
 their patience, their passion  
 attain the ultimate truth  
 they are blessed  
 their company is a bliss  
 their discourse leads to the true path  
 to the temple of absolute truth  
 of divine love, of spiritual union

in the discourse of the Guru  
 is the salvation of the disciple  
 in its absence are all temptations  
 in the discourse of the Guru  
 is the purity of the mind  
 in its absence is all dirt and defection

the Guru's discourse is sublime  
 it quenches all thirst  
 Nānak adores that Guru  
 whose discourse shows His omniscience  
 His transcendence ! (12)

the destitute is lost  
her life is deserted  
like a falling wall  
she has no support  
bereft of the discourse of the Guru  
there is no solace  
no respite from sufferance  
bereft of His love  
all décor is doomed  
there is no place for falsehood  
no place for deception

he is the wise farmer  
who deals in truth  
who plants the right seeds  
who brings peace and recognition

the one who knows her Guru  
knows the ultimate truth  
she is blessed  
she is saved

the one who is oblivious of His presence  
is lost in ignorance and infatuation  
she is caught in the eternal cycle  
of birth and death

all the embellishment of the bride  
the ornaments, the fragrance  
the bright attire  
are of no avail  
if the Lord is indifferent  
if His blessings are not bestowed  
all luxuries are evil  
all indulgence is fruitless

bereft of the discourse of the Guru  
there is no salvation  
Nānak, in the discourse of the Guru  
there is love, there is sublimation ! (13)

when life slips away  
the body decays  
the burning light extinguishes  
the smoke lingers  
there is mourning  
there is sadness

greed and pride engulf the being  
the Lord is forgotten  
the mind is led astray  
there is tension, there is thirst  
only the Guru can save thee  
from evil deeds  
when life is no more  
there is no desire, no distraction  
no pride, no prejudice

if the Guru is gracious  
the mind is held in devotion  
truth and tranquillity prevail there  
cutting the cycle of birth and death  
Nānak, the being is honoured in His audience ! (14)

the body burns on the funeral pyre  
 the mind is haunted by the evil spirits  
 bereft of devotion  
 the mind is stretched in different directions

with the discourse of the Guru  
 the devotee crosses the river of separation  
 bereft of his discourse  
 the being is caught in the eternal cycle

the mind is purified  
 by the divine truth  
 the body is washed  
 by the divine nectar  
 in His will is the eternal peace  
 the eternal order

in the beginning was the truth  
 it led to the flow of waters  
 to the birth of life  
 to the light of love  
 to the rays of purity

in His will  
 the being acquires the right perception  
 Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
 there is meditation, there is reflection ! (15)

Nānak, with the boat of truth  
and reflection on the Guru's Word  
one crosses the river of life  
others revolve in the eternal cycle

the foolhardy, the manmukh, is doomed  
the devotee of truth, the gurmukh, swims across  
bereft of the grace of the Guru  
there is no crossing, no salvation

on the one side  
there is destruction, there is burning  
on the other  
there is construction  
there is growth

He is the source of life and death  
He is the source of all union and separation  
in every breath of the devotee  
is the presence of the Creator  
the devotee lives in His presence  
she drinks His nectar

her pride is gone  
her devotion is eternal

due to Him light spreads  
and darkness recedes  
the devotee is enlightened  
she acquires the eternal truth  
the ignorant lives in darkness  
in eternal confusion and wilderness

the eternal lamp burns for ever  
the divine discourse is realised  
the devotee is honoured  
her knowledge is sublime, her truth is supreme  
Nānak, her life is steady  
her path is serene ! (16)

o dear friend  
 it is the time of union, of love  
 as long as you are young  
 there is life, there is desire  
 the time spent in devotion, in reflection  
 is the time of union  
 of eternal bliss

the devotee is merged in devotion  
 there is no place for pride and prejudice  
 it is the time for listening, for meditation  
 for reflection and comprehension

it is the time to eradicate all evil thoughts  
 of desire and delusion  
 it is the time to be with Him  
 with His truth and transcendence  
 it is not the time of deceit and deception  
 it is the time of reunion and reception

in His company the devotee acquires His culture  
 in His company the devotee attains His nature  
 in His company is purity and piety  
 in His company is steady serenity  
 Nānak, He prevails in the three worlds  
 with love and affection  
 the devotee realises His omniscience  
 in His union  
 there is temperance, there is transcendence ! (17)

there is no fear of death  
no desire to live  
every beat of my heart  
is in the hands of my Lord  
every vibration of my soul  
depends upon the rhythm of His will

o devotee  
meditate and reflect on His nature  
on His culture  
to eradicate ignorance  
to gain knowledge  
of His truth  
of His transcendence  
the Guru dispels all doubts  
all evil thoughts of life and death  
of longings and lust

the rhythm of His music  
vibrates in every beat of the universe  
in every breath of the devotee  
in the devotion of the Guru is your life well-spent

in His audience is all honour  
in His audience is the union of all impulses

body and mind  
spirit and soul  
are united in Him  
are immersed in the sublime Being

if the mind is steady  
and the reflection is serene  
there is peace, there is projection  
there is divine perception

Nānak, there is bliss  
there is the extinction of all misery and sin ! (18)

this mind is stuck in greed and lust  
 the Guru's Word is forgotten  
 the evil thoughts lead to the eternal cycle  
 in the company of the Guru  
 there is the treasure of virtues  
 there is the absence of pride and prejudice  
 in His will is peace and patience  
 in His service is honour and respect  
 day and night there is meditation  
 there is reflection  
 there are all the pleasures of body and soul  
 there is service, there is serenity

the sinner is immersed in her sins  
 she has lost all vision  
 she is afflicted with all miseries  
 the demon has smothered her  
 the foolhardy, the manmukh, is lost  
 the devotee, the gurmukh, enjoys truth and  
 tranquillity

the ignorant, the manmukh, is engrossed  
 in the affairs of this world  
 in corrupt practices  
 and evil deeds  
 the devotee, the gurmukh, serves her Lord  
 and enjoys the blessings of the Guru  
 she forgets not her Master  
 she is recognised in His audience ! (19)

a moment of separation  
leads to anguish, to anxiety  
bereft of His blessings  
there is no peace, no serenity

the Guru's union is love  
in his company is virtue  
chosen are those  
who live in His bliss  
who live in His light  
in His supreme attention  
in His sublime sight

there is no place for haughty aggression  
no place for doubts and depression  
lust for the ephemeral, greed for the transient  
lead the being astray  
from the divine path, from the righteous deeds  
the beloved longs for His love  
the burning desire gives way  
to union and celebration  
there is bliss  
there is happiness, there is devotion  
there is love, there is affection ! (20)

in His Word is love  
in His discourse is bliss  
His eternal truth separates the false from the true  
His presence is a treasure full of diamonds and pearls

the Guru is the purest diamond  
his discourse leads to the Transcendent  
to the sublime union

those who deal in truth are never forgotten  
their fire is extinguished, their thirst is quenched  
they are beyond the reach of the demon  
they swim across the river of life  
they resonate in His sublime light

those who live in truth  
live in love and union  
in all the riches of the world  
there is no treasure  
richer than the love of the Lord  
purer than the union with the Master ! (21)

roaming around in different lands  
the being moves from one confusion to another  
the inner dirt remains dark  
life is laden with sin and suffering  
bereft of the discourse of the Guru  
there is no reflection, no perception

the inner fire must be extinguished  
with meditation and reflection  
the Guru's Word discerns truth and transcendence  
in His will is all serenity  
in His will is peace and prosperity  
in His will is all bliss, all honour

the being is dissolved  
the pride melts away  
those who go astray  
are lost for ever  
are doomed to darkness  
this life is precious  
this meditation is a treasure  
in His union is love  
in His vision is comprehension

in His order  
the being swims across the river of life  
she is honoured  
she perceives the divine light ! (22)

those who deal in truth  
retain the precious treasure  
their profit stays for ever  
for the Lord knows the right from the wrong  
the false from the true

stay with truth my friend  
it leads to eternal virtue, to eternal bliss

those who deal in deceit and deception  
they are never happy  
they live in eternal agitation  
like a deer caught in a net  
they always live in separation  
in dejection, in depression

deception has no place, no caste, no creed  
it is destined to face ignominy

Nānak, the discourse of the Guru  
discerns the truth from falsity  
in its meditation is every virtue  
in its reflection is eternal serenity ! (23)

all these riches and rituals  
all this wealth and youth  
are ephemeral, a matter of days

there is nothing to be proud of  
there is nothing that lasts for ever  
it is the time for meditation and reflection  
for recitation and reception

many a friend is already gone  
lying buried in cemeteries

o young, beautiful girl  
think of your in-laws, of your future  
your Lord will love  
only your virtue and your truth  
spend your time in His love  
in His affection  
in good deeds  
in His sublime reflection ! (24)

He is the jouissance  
He is the indulgence  
He is the body  
He is the bed  
He is the joy incarnate

He is the fish  
He is the fisherman  
He is the net  
He is the bait  
He is in every play  
in every pearl  
He is the eternal lover

He is the lake  
He is the swan  
He is the seeker  
He is the sought ! (25)

let your body be the soil  
your good deeds, the seeds  
and meditation, your water  
be the farmer of the Lord  
and raise the crop of virtue

shed all pride and lust  
your parents, your women, your children  
will all be left behind  
stuck in the eternal grind

weed out all your evil thoughts  
live a life of steady and serene ideas  
live under the shadow of the inevitable death  
discern the sacred texts  
to recognise the eternal Lord  
for the merger of the seeker and the sought ! (26)

sow good deeds in your fields  
and irrigate them with the water of truth  
be a farmer with faith in Him  
you need not bother about hell and heaven  
about this or the other world  
clever chat will lead you nowhere  
wasting your youth in ambition and desire  
you will lose your very being  
your very attire

evil thoughts breed evil  
dirt leads to more dirt  
the pure lotus is not recognised  
the truth of love is lost  
indulging in wealth and women  
there is no peace, no projection

those who live in His will  
live in His truth  
they find the sublime refuge

all these austerities and abstentions  
all these ritual prayers and ceremonies  
lead you astray

all these riches, all these pearls  
are a matter of days  
under the shadow of death  
all wealth and hearth are washed away ! (27)

He alone is the Maula, the Master  
who is the Creator of all humanity  
all beings, animate and inanimate  
who has put together all elements  
to create new forms, new lives

o mullah, the priest  
the end awaits us all  
live in His will, in His order  
to avoid all misery and fall  
o mullah, o qāzī  
you deserve to be a priest  
if you live in His knowledge, in His discourse  
all your learning, all your rituals  
will lead to depression, dejection and remorse

a qāzī is he who lives in His meditation, in His  
reflection  
meditate on the truth of the true Lord  
your five prayers  
and your learned discourses  
are of no avail  
when the last hour strikes  
when the end is announced ! (28)

the greedy dog has taken over  
led by the bitches of depression  
they bark day and night  
there is a dagger to kill and rotten corpses to eat

bereft of His will and bliss  
the being has taken awful form  
only His blessing can save the humanity  
this is the only support, only hope

burnt in hatred and jealousy  
passion and anger, loot and plunder  
the being leads the life of a scavenger  
in the garb of a faqir  
there are deceits and evil deeds  
the being has become a thief, a thug  
the more he hankers after  
the more he is drenched in dirt

the ungrateful being is tortured  
he dare not appear in His audience  
bereft of all support and bliss  
the scavenger is lost for ever ! (29)

all knowledge is due to Him  
all discernment is due to His will  
as He knows, so He acts  
there is but one measure for all deeds  
there is no place for clever chat

all dispensation is due to His blessing  
due to His compassion  
it is all His creation  
His conception  
His convention

His benevolence is transparent  
His kindness knows no limit  
acts and intentions go together  
without good deeds there is no salvation

he has the knowledge  
who knows his Master  
his acts are supreme  
his words are serene ! (30)

Thou art the ocean of knowledge  
I am but a small fish  
how can I apprehend  
Thy vast dimensions  
Thy innumerable conceptions

I know not the fisherman  
I know not the boat  
Thou art my only refuge  
my only support  
I cannot fathom the depths of Thy benevolence  
the heights of Thy transcendence

Thou art omniscient  
Thou art gracious  
I am ignorant, I am indulgent  
Nānak, I pray, I beseech  
I lay myself at Thy feet

I reflect, I meditate  
I yearn for Thy love  
Nānak, to see, to perceive, to comprehend  
all depends upon Thy will  
upon Thy benevolence, upon Thy benediction ! (31)

in His will is all bounty  
in His will is all charity

if He wills, there is construction  
if He wills, there is destruction  
He is the Truth, the Verity  
the being is lost in ignominy

he who sows knows his plants  
their nature, their culture  
their flowers, their seeds  
as you sow  
so do you reap

the false wall is constructed in ignorance  
the fool's acts follow no coarse  
Nānak, in His will is all truth  
all wisdom, all discourse ! (32)

what has to happen  
will happen  
His will cannot be altered  
His order cannot be changed

there is no light without oil  
one must discern and describe  
the wisdom of the sacred texts  
one must realise the eternal truth

this is the oil that makes the lamp burn  
it gives light and comprehension  
it leads to the righteous path  
to the truth of the Lord

Nānak, this world is ephemeral  
this life is short  
in His grace  
is all humility  
all service  
all serenity ! (33)

and thus the Bābā continued  
to discern and describe  
the vicissitudes of life  
the complexities of human thoughts and deeds  
Truth and Love were always the two eternal themes  
of his divine discourse  
he was critical of all rituals  
of all ceremonies  
of all that was based on falsity and corruption  
he went to see all the sadhus and the faqirs  
the yogis and the siddhas  
he was always engaged in dialectical discussions  
he was ruthless in his opinions  
in his sarcasm  
in his critique  
he spared none  
the highest, the richest  
the mighty, the princes

he was sad  
 that this wonderful world  
 this sacred creation of the Lord of the universe  
 was so polluted, so corrupt  
 in the name of religion  
 the humble people were looted  
 the meek had no place in this world of the powerful  
 he lamented the darkness of the mind  
 the ignorance of the spirit  
 the stronger suppressed the weak  
 the powerful crushed the poor

he often wondered  
 why the Lord Almighty let this happen  
 why so much sufferance was the lot of his countrymen  
 why the women were considered evil  
 who gave birth to pīrs and princes  
 who gave birth to sadhus and scholars  
 on whom depended all creation  
 all birth, all begetting  
 all friendships, all families ...

the places of worship, the houses of God  
 had become the dens of corruption  
 the sacred courtyards  
 had become the dwellings of the demons  
 he encouraged the farmer  
 to sow the seeds of good deeds  
 to plough the fields of truth and love  
 he asked the Hindus  
 to wear the sacred thread of humility and honesty  
 he asked the Muslims to substitute their five prayers

with truth, justice, charity, love and devotion  
he told the merchants to deal in the business of truth  
to meditate on the nature of honesty and generosity  
he told men to be righteous and courageous  
he told women to be true to their love and longings...

Mardānā and his Guru, the venerable Bābā  
went around the world to witness  
what was going on in their beloved country  
in the sacred land of the great rishīs, of sublime saints  
who once excelled in spiritual life  
in serene and superb living  
in perfect co-ordination of thoughts and deeds  
in humility and charity  
in love and devotion

and he told his dear friend, Mardānā  
not to despair  
the Lord is great  
great is His universe  
and even greater is His will and order

there is always hope in His devotion  
in the humble attitude of love and affection  
in meditation and reflection ...

maybe the things will change  
as He wills, so it is done  
in Him there is hope, there is happiness

there is music, there is rhythm  
His nature is wonderful  
there is no limit to His manifestation  
His sublime presence ...

and in this vein he composed his Bārah Māhā  
on the vicissitudes of nature in the twelve months  
in the twelve moods of his wonderful Punjab  
the sacred land of the five rivers...



# BĀRĀH MĀHĀ



## BĀRAH MĀHĀ

in Chēt (March) there is spring  
the butterflies spread their wings on the flowers  
the nature is in full bloom  
the beloved longs for her Love  
in separation, in anguish  
she spends her time in sorrow, in sufferance  
the cuckoo sings the melodies of love on the  
mango tree  
the butterflies sing and dance on the flowers  
Nānak, in this auspicious month of Chēt  
the beloved resonates with His love, with His devotion  
she vibrates with the pangs of separation !

in Waisākh (April) the branches are adorned  
with fresh green leaves

the beloved awaits for His love  
for His benevolence  
to cross the river of sorrow and sufferance  
bereft of His grace  
she is restless, she is tormented in anguish

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
she discerns His truth, His transcendence  
she perceives her Love in meditation  
in reflection !

in Jēṭh (May) the being cannot forget her Lord  
it is hot, it is burning

she is restless  
she prays, she yearns to meet her Love  
to be with Him in His sublime presence

Nānak, she meditates, she reflects  
to discern His truth, His transcendence

to be blessed by His benediction  
by His benevolence !

in Asár (June) the sun burns in the sky  
the earth is scorched  
engulfed by the overwhelming fires  
all water evaporates

the creatures suffer in hunger and thirst  
the chariot of the sun burns  
all that falls in its crest

Nānak, the beloved who prays and reflects  
is rid of her sins and sufferance

she vibrates for her Love  
she resonates in His presence !

in Sāwan (July) it is pleasant  
the clouds of hope hover over the entire universe

my Love is in far away lands  
I suffer in separation, I yearn for His affection

lonely, restless, in anguish, in pain  
I tremble with every movement, every strain

Nānak, blessed is the beloved  
who resonates with His union  
who vibrates with His communion !

Bhādō (August) has not brought peace and serenity  
the devotee is stuck in divisions and duality

there are rains all over  
the earth is soaked in water

the night is dark and the clouds are thundering  
the cuckoo sings the hymns of the Lord  
the peacocks are dancing  
the lakes are full, the insects are gathering

Nānak prays for the grace of the Guru  
to spare his devotee  
from all sorrow and suffering !

in Asun (September) the beloved withers in anguish  
bewildered, she is lost in dualities  
in falsehood and pretension, there is no serenity

the heat is receding, the cold is approaching  
there are fresh green branches on the trees  
but there is no let-up in sorrow and sufferance

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
there is love, there is peace, there is fragrance !

in Katak (October) His will surveys the entire universe  
the devotee discerns His truth, His transcendence

with the lamp of meditation and reflection  
with the oil of love and the wick of affection  
there is union, there is reception

those who are drenched in sin and squalor  
they are doomed, they are lost in wilderness

Nānak, those who are blessed by the Lord  
they are saved  
they are bestowed with His benediction  
with His benevolence !

in Maghar (November) there is harmony  
between the body and the mind  
the beloved prays to the Lord  
for His love sublime

she reflects upon the ingenuity of the eternal Creator  
upon His truth and transcendence  
upon His benediction and benevolence  
she vibrates with the hymns of devotion

Nānak, she adores the Lord  
with all her love and affection !

in Pokh (December) it is biting cold  
all nature is withered and dry

the devotee lingers in anguish, in separation  
in anxieties, in dejection

those who resonate with His love and devotion  
they are blessed by the grace of the Guru

they vibrate with His hymns, with His reflection  
they perceive His light in every projection

Nānak prays to the sublime Lord  
for His audience, for His omniscience  
for His grace, for His presence !

in Māgh (January) the devotee bathes  
in the pure waters of divine reflection

she resonates with cosmic rhythms  
she vibrates with love and affection

she enjoys the holy dip  
in the union of Ganga and Jamuna  
in the depths of the seven seas

Nānak, the month of Māgh is sweet and serene  
the devotee bathes  
in the pristine waters of the divine stream !

in Phalgun (February) the weather is ecstatic  
there is sublime communion  
all greed and lust are gone  
there is joy, there is union

in His will, in His bliss  
all evil is eradicated  
all actions are sublimated

there is no place for false embellishment  
for superficial decoration  
in love and affection  
there is purity of meditation  
there is sublimity of reflection

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
there is union, there is divine reception !

all seasons are pleasant  
all weathers are auspicious  
all periods, all moments herald the sacred times  
of divine union, of sublime communion

in the presence of the Lord of all projections  
all decoration, all embellishment  
bring joy and bliss of the sublime union

there is love, there is affection  
the devotee is surcharged with divine perception

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
there is meditation, there is reflection  
there is love, there is affection !



it was Bārah Māhā  
meditations and reflections  
on the nature and the vicissitudes of the seasons  
in the Punjab  
the sacred land of five rivers

in his Udāsīs, the travels to the different  
far away lands of Hindustān and beyond  
the Bābā often met the religious mendicants  
of different sects  
siddhas and yogis  
who practiced austerities  
to achieve supernatural powers  
to be able to perform miracles  
to impress the simple people  
to involve the innocent populace  
in all kinds of rituals and rites  
which led nowhere  
which only created more problems for the ignorant  
the divine purpose was often forgotten  
the appearances took over the transcendence  
these siddhās and yogis lived in a different world

in āshrams and derās  
away from the common people  
they gave the impression of simplicity  
divinity and sublimity

in practice, there were deluded  
in their own net  
in their own illusions  
they stayed away  
from the real problems of the people  
their miseries, their measures  
the metaphysical snares  
replaced the Truth of the True Lord ...

in one of the compositions, the Sidh Gost  
the dialogue with the siddhas  
he described and discerned  
the complexities and absurdities  
of religious life based on false metaphysics  
where the truth and love of the Lord of the universe  
were forgotten  
were reduced to mere ceremonies  
mere disputes over frivolous issues  
mere discussions in the void  
mere intellectual gymnastics  
to mislead the innocent  
to misappropriate the spiritual and the divine

in Āsā dī ḥVār the Bābā described  
this terrible state of affairs...

the disciples gather, the gurus dance  
the feet stamp, the heads in trance  
there is dust all over the hair  
people laugh and return home  
all this jugglery for a few loaves of bread  
this indignity, this stampede on earth ...

all austerities are hollow  
all miracles are illusions  
the only miracle  
is the miracle of His Creation  
of His Truth  
of His Love...



## SİDH GOŞT



## SIDH GOṢṭ

hail the assembly of the siddhas  
hail the assembly of the sages

I bow before my Lord  
who imbibes in Himself all truth and transcendence  
I offer my head, my heart to the Almighty Lord

Nānak, in the company of the sages  
there is truth, there is tranquillity  
there is honour, there is serenity

in wilderness, in wandering  
there is no truth, no reflection  
bereft of the true Word  
there is no perception, no salvation ! (1)

where do you come from ?  
who are you ?  
what path you follow ?  
what indeed is your goal ?

in search of the divine truth  
I live in His will  
I hail the assembly of the sages

O Bairagi, please tell us  
where do you stay ?  
where do you subsist ?  
where do you come from ?  
where do you go ?  
Nānak, what indeed is your path ? (2)

my heart vibrates with His eternal presence  
my mind follows the path of righteousness

in His will is steady serenity  
Nānak, in His will is divine sublimity

with the Word of the Guru  
there is perception of His omniscience  
there is reflection of His truth and transcendence ! (3)

Charpat asks Nānak  
how can we cross the river of sorrow and sufferance ?  
how can we arrive at its perception ?

one who asks this question knows the answer  
you are the yogi, the sage  
you should know better ! (4)

as the lotus remains pure in water  
as the duck glides along  
so with the Word of the Guru  
with meditation and reflection  
one crosses this river of sorrow and sufferance

those who live in steady serenity  
who surmount all anguish and anxiety  
Nānak hails those sages  
who perceive and teach His truth  
who live in His refuge ! (5)

o wise and noble sage  
do not be angry  
please answer us gently  
how does one find  
such a Guru sublime ?

o yogi, this restless mind finds its steady serenity  
with meditation and reflection  
with love and affection  
with truth and transcendence ! (6)

remain away from all hustle and bustle  
wander in the jungles  
and eat fruits and roots  
to meditate and reflect upon the eternal truth

with sacred baths at holy sites  
we eradicate all impurities and dirt  
Loharipa, the disciple of Gorakh  
explains thus the sublimity of the yogic discipline  
of steady serenity and divine reflection ! (7)

one should stay steady and serene  
in country and town  
Nānak, bereft of His reflection  
there is no perception  
there is greed and lust  
there is hunger and thirst

those who are blessed by the Guru  
they live in His truth  
they trade in His truth  
Nānak, with mild sleep and little eating  
they spend their lives in meditation and reflection ! (8)

to live in His omniscience, in His presence  
is the true path of transcendence  
all these yogic disguises and pains  
serve no purpose  
these are efforts in vain

Nānak, those who follow the righteous path  
do not suffer anguish and pain  
they enjoy the divine bliss  
they stay steady and serene ! (9)

with the resonance of His Word  
with the earrings of His discourse  
there is no pride, no pretence  
there is no passion, no anger, no offence

Nānak, in His blessing, in His benevolence  
there is truth, there is transcendence  
with the grace of the Guru  
there is reflection, there is omniscience ! (10)

o yogi, let the control of passions be your begging bowl  
and the discipline of five senses, your cap  
the submission of body, your seat of meditation  
and the temperance of mind, your loin cloth  
let truth, patience and serenity be your disciples

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
there is meditation, there is reflection  
there is divine truth, there is sublime perception ! (11)

who is hidden ?  
who is saved ?  
who is in tune with the eternal rhythm ?  
who is born ?  
whom death takes away ?  
who is immersed in the three worlds ? (12)

my Lord is immanent in the whole universe  
the devotees are saved  
they resonate with divine hymn  
they vibrate with His sublime rhythm

bereft of His grace  
the being is caught in the eternal cycle

Nānak, with His benevolence  
the devotees perceive His truth and transcendence !  
(13)

how is the being in bondage ?  
how is he stung by the serpent ?  
how is he lost ?  
how is he found ?  
how is there light ?  
how is there darkness ?  
whoever perceives this truth is our Guru ! (14)

o yogi, bereft of His Word  
there is bondage  
there is serpent  
bereft of His Word  
there is sorrow  
there is sufferance  
with the grace of the Guru  
darkness recedes and light pervades  
Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
all pride and pretence fade ! (15)

the one who controls his senses  
who is steady and serene  
whose mind flutters not  
whose body follows His discipline  
he perceives His truth in His sublime cave  
Nānak, in His will, in His truth  
he is sound and safe ! (16)

why is this renunciation ?  
why is this wandering ?  
why is this guise of a sage ?  
what indeed is your goal ?  
how do you intend to cross  
the river of sorrow and sufferance ? (17)

in search of the true devotee  
is this wandering  
for his love, for his presence is this disguise  
I live for truth  
I trade in truth  
Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
one crosses the river of sorrow and sufferance ! (18)

how have you followed this grind ?  
how have you controlled your mind ?

how have you transcended hope and despair ?  
how have you perceived the sublime light ?

how can one cut into iron without teeth ?  
Nānak, how can one arrive at His truth ? (19)

with the grace of the Guru  
this mind is steady and serene  
with the Word of the Guru  
it vibrates with divine hymns  
with the Word of the Guru

there is no hope, no despair  
the devotee perceives His light in every sphere

with discipline and temperance  
the iron of evil is cut with His omniscience

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
there is discerning  
there is the crossing of the river of sufferance

there is benediction  
there is benevolence ! (20)

what was there at the beginning of Time ?  
where was the Creator ?

how does one perceive this sublime truth ?  
how does one stay steady and escape the final grind ?

with the Word of the Guru  
there is no fear, no ferment  
no pride, no pretence

Nānak is beholden to those  
who perceive His truth  
who live in His benediction  
in His divine refuge ! (21)

where does one come from ?  
where does one go ?  
where does one stay steady and serene ?

with the grace of the Guru  
the devotee sheds greed and lust  
with the grace of the Guru  
he gains His trust

how does one arrive at His perception ?  
how does one follow His projection ?  
Nānak, please enlighten us with this sublime reflection

in His will is birth  
in His will is death  
in His will is every breath

with the Word of the Guru  
the devotee perceives His truth  
with the Word of the Guru  
he stays in His divine refuge ! (22)

in the beginning of the beginning  
 at the beginning of Time  
 there was none but the Lord sublime  
  
 with the Word of the Guru  
 the devotee discerns the discourse of His  
 manifestation  
 the discourse of His immanence  
  
 with the Word of the Guru  
 with meditation and reflection  
 the devotee is rid of all dualities and divisions  
 of all conflicts and confusions  
  
 Nānak, with the Word of the Guru  
 the devotee reflects and perceives His truth  
  
 with the Word of the Guru  
 the devotee lives in His sublime refuge  
 with the Word of the Guru  
  
 the yogi sheds all pride and pretence  
 he enjoys His benediction and benevolence ! (23)

from the divine immanence  
there was sublime manifestation  
the Creator transcended His creation

with the Word of the Guru  
there is truth  
there is transcendence  
there is reflection  
there is perception

there is but one unique verity  
it resonates in every breath of the devotee

with the Word of the Guru  
the yogi perceives His truth  
the lotus of his mind is in bloom

with the Word of the Guru  
the yogi burns his dualities and desires

he discerns the mysterious universe  
Nānak, the devotee realises his self in every creation  
he is bestowed with His sublime reflection ! (24)

those who reflect upon His truth  
they resonate with His truth  
they vibrate with His truth

those who live in falsities and pretensions  
their mind is restless  
they are caught in the eternal cycle

with the Word of the Guru  
there is no birth, no death  
there is no pride, no pretence

bereft of His grace  
there is anguish, there is pain  
all the physical efforts are in vain  
with the Word of the Guru  
there is perception, there is salvation

Nānak, with the Word of the Guru  
there is renunciation, there is devotion  
there is reflection, there is benevolence ! (25)

the ignorant follows the wrong path  
restless, bewildered, he wanders in the jungles

he is stuck with greed and lust  
he is sick with hunger and thirst  
he prays at the graveyards  
he is lost in ceremonies and superstitions

bereft of the Word of the Guru  
he is caught in dualities and divisions

Nānak, with the Word of the Guru  
the devotee perceives His truth  
he lives in divine refuge ! (26)

the devotee lives in the fear of the Lord  
he follows His divine command  
with the Word of the Guru  
he controls his bewildered mind

with the grace of the Guru  
the devotee vibrates with divine hymns  
his heart resonates with cosmic rhythms

Nānak, with meditation and reflection  
the devotee is immersed in His sublime projection !  
(27)

with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee discerns the Vedas  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee crosses the river of life

with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee perceives the divine light  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee reflects upon His immanence

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee is saved  
 he enjoys His benediction and benevolence ! (28)

with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee discerns and describes the eternal verity

with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee resonates with love and affection  
 he spends his time in meditation and reflection

with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee attains the spiritual height  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 he fathoms the mystery of life

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee is rid of his desires and strife ! (29)

in His will is the wondrous creation  
 in His will is construction and conception

with the grace of the Guru  
 there is love, there is affection  
 there is truth, there is transcendence  
 there is benediction, there is benevolence

bereft of meditation and reflection  
 there is no honour, no reception  
 Nānak, bereft of meditation and reflection  
 there is alienation, there is dejection ! (30)

with the grace of the Guru  
 there is reflection, there is discerning  
 there is truth, there is transcendence

with the grace of the Guru  
 there are no dualities, no divisions  
 there are no wanderings, no renunciations

with the grace of the Guru  
 there is the crossing of the river of sufferance  
 Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
 there is benediction, there is benevolence ! (31)

in His reflection  
 there is divine perception  
 there is no pride, no pretence  
 there is truth, there is immanence  
 there is temperance, there is discipline  
 there is serenity, there is salvation

in His reflection  
 the devotee perceives the truth of the three worlds  
 Nānak, in His reflection  
 there is peace, there is projection ! (32)

in His reflection  
 there is dialogue and discussion  
 in His reflection  
 there is discipline and devotion  
 there is perception and discerning

bereft of divine reflection  
 it is all baseless begging

Nānak hails the devotees  
 who resonate with meditation and devotion  
 who follow the divine projection ! (33)

with the grace of the true Guru  
 there is meditation and reflection  
 there is devotion and discipline

the yogis are lost in their twelve sects  
 and the sanyāsīs in their six  
 those who reflect upon the Word of the Guru  
 are saved, are honoured  
 bereft of the Word of the Guru  
 there is duality, there is division

Nānak hails those fortunate devotees  
 who vibrate with His truth  
 who live in His truth ! (34)

with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee receives the jewel of meditation  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 he reflects, he discerns  
 he trades in truth  
 he stays steady and serene

with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee perceives His immanence  
 His manifestation  
 Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee escapes all evil and deception ! (35)

with the grace of the Guru  
 there are charities, there are sacred baths  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 there is meditation, there is steady perception  
 there is honour, there is reception  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 there is no fear, no ferment  
 no conflict, no confusion  
 Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
 there is love, there is affection ! (36)

with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee discerns the Shāstras, the Vedas  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee comprehends the mysteries of the universe

with the grace of the Guru  
 there is no enemy, no jealousy  
 no duality, no division  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee is saturated with His meditation

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee arrives at His truth and transcendence !  
 (37)

bereft of the grace of the Guru  
the being is caught in the eternal cycle  
bereft of the grace of the Guru  
there is anguish, there is pain  
bereft of the grace of the Guru  
all efforts are in vain

bereft of the grace of the Guru  
there is hunger and thirst, there is poison  
bereft of the grace of the Guru  
the being is stung by the serpent  
Nānak, bereft of the grace of the Guru  
there is fear, there is ferment ! (38)

with the grace of the Guru  
there is smooth crossing of the river of life  
there is no sin, no sufferance  
there is eternal light  
with the grace of the Guru  
the devotee discerns the Word divine

with the grace of the Guru  
there is meditation, there is reflection  
Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
there is sublime perception ! (39)

with the grace of the Guru  
 the bridge was built  
 and the Lanka of passions was destroyed

with the grace of the Guru  
 Babhikhan's secret was disclosed  
 and Rāvan's kingdom was ruined

with the grace of the Guru  
 even the stones did not drown  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 thirty-three million gods were safe and sound ! (40)

with the grace of the Guru  
 there is no cycle of birth and death  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 there is honour, there is respect

with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee discerns the right from the wrong  
 he follows the contours of the divine discourse

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
 there is no bondage, no hindrance  
 there is truth, there is transcendence ! (41)

with the grace of the Guru  
there is meditation, there is perception  
with the grace of the Guru  
there is no pride, no pretension

with the grace of the Guru  
there is devotion  
there is cosmic reflection  
with the grace of the Guru  
there is truth, there is transcendence  
Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
there is discerning, there is benevolence ! (42)

what is the beginning ?  
what is the auspicious time ?  
who is your Guru ?  
whose disciple you claim to be ?

what is your reflection ?  
what is your perception ?  
O Nānak, please tell us  
what indeed is your discourse ?  
how does the Word help you across ? (43)

from the beginning of the beginning  
 is the grace of the Guru  
 is the auspicious time  
 His Word is the Guru  
 that saturates our mind

Nānak, He is, He will ever be  
 the Lord sublime  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee sheds all pride and pretence

His Word resonates in the entire universe  
 the devotee vibrates with His love and benevolence !  
 (44)

how can one cut into iron with the teeth of wax ?  
 how can one face the onslaught of māyā ?  
 how can one escape pride and prejudice ?

in which cave can we keep the house of snow  
 and the coat of fire ?

what is the goal of meditation and reflection ?  
 what is the source of truth and perception ? (45)

with the Word of the Guru  
the being escapes all pride and pretensions  
all dualities and divisions

beret of the Word of the Guru  
the being is lost in falsities and deceptions  
with the Word of the Guru  
there is meditation, there is reflection

Nānak, with the Word of the Guru  
the fire is extinguished  
the being is free from all false projections ! (46)

those who live in fear and ferment  
they meditate, they reflect  
they discern His Word

they vibrate with His love and affection  
their passions are sublimated  
they live in His will, in His bliss

Nānak, they are blessed  
by His benediction, by His benevolence ! (47)

how is our mind drenched in darkness ?  
 how is it enlightened by the sun of divine perception ?

how can one escape the eternal cycle ?  
 how can we surmount the demon of death ?  
 how can we discern and perceive His truth ?  
 please Nānak, discern and describe these reflections !  
 (48)

with the Word of the Guru  
 the mind is enlightened  
 the sun of knowledge rises  
 and the darkness recedes

with the support of meditation and reflection  
 there is no despair, no dejection  
 there is steady serenity  
 there is easy crossing of the river of life

with the grace of the Guru  
 there is truth, there is light

Nānak, such a devotee escapes the demon of death  
 there is truth, there is trust ! (49)

in meditation, in reflection  
there is perception, there is sublimation

bereft of meditation  
there are sins and sufferance  
in meditation, in reflection  
there is peace, there is projection  
there is no duality, no deception

Nānak, when the Word resonates in the universe  
there is divine music, there is transcendence ! (50)

my Lord is sublime  
His immanence surveys the three worlds  
the devotee who perceives His transcendence  
is bestowed with His benediction, with His benevolence

he discerns His mysterious universe  
he attains His love, His essence  
the devotee who meditates and reflects  
who sheds all pride and pretence

Nānak, he is blessed with His omniscience  
with His presence ! (51)

all talk about His immanence  
how do we perceive His presence ?  
how do we discern His omniscience ?

it all depends upon deeds and devotion  
as we are born, so are our actions

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
there is no cycle of birth and death  
there is meditation, there is redemption ! (52)

in meditation and reflection  
the devotee transcends the physical universe

he discerns His truth and transcendence  
he vibrates with cosmic hymns

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
the devotee discerns the Word of the Guru  
he lives in truth  
and enjoys the divine refuge ! (53)

in meditation and reflection  
there is peace and projection

with the grace of the Guru  
the devotee is always awakened  
he sleeps no more

with the Word of the Guru  
there is discerning, there is sublimation  
there is easy crossing, there is salvation

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
there is presence, there is benevolence ! (54)

bereft of His grace  
the being is bewildered  
he discerns not the sublime truth  
he is ensnared in falsity  
the demon of death hovers over his destiny

bereft of the Word of the Guru  
there is no honour, no respect  
there is no crossing, no support

Nānak, bereft of meditation and reflection  
there is no devotion, no reception ! (55)

with the Word of the Guru  
 there is discerning, there is perception  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 there is serenity, there is salvation

bereft of the His Word  
 the ignorant is lost  
 he faces the onslaught of sins and suffering

Nānak, in His will is all knowledge, all discerning  
 all benediction, all becoming ! (56)

in His truth  
 there is transcendence, there is treasure

the devotee crosses the river of life  
 and helps others along in discerning His truth and  
 light

Nānak, in truth and transcendence  
 there is meditation and reflection  
 there is benediction and benevolence ! (57)

what is the Word ?  
whose discerning helps us cross the river of life ?  
what discipline we follow ?  
where is His light ?

how can we reflect upon His Word ?  
how do we perceive the eternal truth ?

please Nānak, explain to us this mystery  
how do we comprehend this complexity ?  
with the Word of the Guru  
there is no duality, no division  
no conflict, no confusion

with meditation and reflection  
there is projection, there is divine perception ! (58)

His Word surcharges the whole universe  
it resonates in every heart  
it is the source of all reflection  
it is the source of divine perception

with the grace of the Guru  
His Word saturates our mind  
with the grace of the Guru  
there is no duality, no bind

with the grace of the Guru  
there is steady serenity  
there is sublimity

the devotee crosses the river of life  
he perceives the divine light

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
with the Word of the Guru  
there is truth and transcendence  
there is benediction and benevolence ! (59)

o yogi, all your breathing exercises  
all your physical gymnastics  
serve no purpose  
they lead nowhere

with meditation and reflection  
there is projection, there is divine perception

with the grace of the Guru  
the devotee perceives the truth of His immanence  
His sublime Word resonates in his heart  
he is enlightened, he discerns His essence

with the Word of the Guru  
there is communion  
there is love, there is affection, there is union

Nānak, with the Word of the Guru  
there are cosmic projections  
the heart beats with divine perceptions ! (60)

the air is the breath of life  
but where does the air come from ?  
what is the source of our knowledge ?  
what is the source of our perception ?

o yogi, bereft of the Word of the Guru  
there is no air, no breath  
there is greed and lust  
there is hunger and thirst  
the Word of the Guru is the source of all knowledge  
of all truth

what is the eternal truth ?  
what is the sublime refuge ?

Nānak, with the Word of the Guru  
the devotee discerns His truth  
there is steady serenity  
there is sublime refuge ! (61)

when there is no meditation, no reflection  
when the Word of the Guru is forgotten  
when there is no discipline, no devotion  
when there is no truth, no transcendence  
there is no serenity, no salvation

Nānak, with meditation and reflection  
there is benevolence, there is benediction ! (62)

with the grace of the Guru  
there is meditation, there is reflection  
there is the nectar of His truth and transcendence

with the Word of the Guru  
there is discerning, there is perception  
there is smooth crossing, there is sublimation  
Nānak, with the Word of the Guru

the devotee discerns the sublime truth  
he remains steady and serene in divine refuge ! (63)

how can this mind, this wild elephant  
be disciplined ?  
o renunciant, where is that sublime Word ?  
that brings peace and serenity  
that controls human vanity

with the grace of the Guru  
the restless mind is steady and serene  
the heart vibrates with divine hymns

how can one perceive this verity ?  
how can one fathom the inner complexity ?  
how can the warm sun of knowledge rise  
in the cave of the cold moon ?

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
there is no pride, no prejudice  
there is serenity, there is verity  
there is patience, there is tranquillity ! (64)

with the grace of the Guru  
there is knowledge  
there is perception  
there is steady discerning

there is no need of breathing exercises  
no need of physical gymnastics

with the grace of the Guru  
the heart vibrates with divine rhythms

there is eternal light  
there is divine life  
there is truth  
there is transcendence  
the whole universe resonates with His benevolence

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
the mind is steady  
the heart beats with serenity, with sublimity ! (65)

when there was no mind, no body, no heart  
how could there be meditation and reflection ?

when there was no form, no figure, no blood, no bones  
how could there be any perception  
of His truth, of His transcendence ?

Nānak, the devotee dyed in the colour of meditation  
perceives His truth, His transcendence  
in all conditions, in all times ! (66)

when there was no mind, no body, no bones  
there was eternal silence and sublimation  
when there was no breath, no lotus within  
there was eternal truth and transcendence  
when there was no form, no figure  
there was the Word in the beginning and for ever  
when there was no earth, no sky  
there was the eternal light in the three worlds

Nānak, all forms, all figures were within His  
immanence  
He was, He is, He will ever be  
the source of all life, of all light  
of all creation, of all sight ! (67)

how is there creation ?  
how is there destruction ?

o yogi, bereft of meditation  
there is no creation, no consumption

bereft of reflection  
there is pride, there is prejudice  
there are sins, there is sufferance

with the grace of the Guru  
the devotee perceives the divine truth  
there is purity, there is presence

with the Word of the Guru  
there is no pride, no pretence  
there is truth, there is transcendence

Nānak, bereft of meditation and reflection  
there is no discerning, no perception ! (68)

with the grace of the Guru  
 the devotee discerns the divine discourse  
 with the grace of the Guru  
 there is truth  
 there is transcendence

rare is the devotee who perceives His truth  
 rare is the devotee who finds His refuge

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
 the yogi follows the divine projection  
 there is steady serenity in meditation and reflection !  
 (69)

bereft of the grace of the Guru  
 there is no peace, no serenity  
 bereft of the grace of the Guru  
 there is no meditation, no sublimity

bereft of the grace of the Guru  
 there is no reflection, no salvation  
 bereft of the grace of the Guru  
 there are sins, there is sufferance

Nānak, bereft of the grace of the Guru  
 this life is drenched in falsities and deception ! (70)

with the grace of the Guru  
the devotee controls his mind and pride

with the grace of the Guru  
there is eternal light

with the grace of the Guru  
there is no fear of the demon of death

with the grace of the Guru  
there is no conflict, no strife

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru  
the divine truth is in sight ! (71)

o yogi, bereft of meditation and reflection  
there is no yoga, no perception

with divine reflection  
there is peace, there is projection  
there is truth, there is transcendence

bereft of meditation and reflection  
there is duplicity, there is division  
there is conflict, there is confusion

with the grace of the Guru, o yogi  
there is yoga, there is perception

Nānak, bereft of meditation and reflection  
there is no discerning, no salvation ! (72)

my Lord alone knows His dimensions  
none else can discern His extensions

He is manifest, He is immanent  
He is the sole agent of every action

many a siddhā has searched in vain  
none has perceived His grain

He is, He will ever be the Sovereign of His universe  
of this grand spectacle

Nānak, there is but one unique Lord  
in His will is every action, every dispensation ! (73)

thus the Bābā continued his discussions, his debates  
with the siddhas and sadhus of his time

there was no place in his path  
for false deals and delusions  
for endless disputes over austerities and renunciations  
for ceremonial paraphernalia

the corrupt, the dishonest, the cruel  
could not be saved  
by rites and rituals  
miracles and mysteries  
prayers and pilgrimages

the salvation  
if there was one  
depended on  
truth  
love  
purity  
every thing else was illusion of the mind  
delusion of the soul ...

once Mardānā and the Bābā visited  
the famous temple of Jagan Nāth  
the priests were busy in the worship of the idol  
with candles and flowers  
the Bābā asked them to shun all these rituals  
all these rites and superstitions

he asked Mardānā to tune his Rabāb  
to compose the divine worship  
to vibrate the cosmic music

the whole universe prays for the Lord, he said  
the skies serve as the vast plateau  
where the sun and the moon burn as two lamps  
and the stars twinkle in the sky  
there is the incense of the woods  
and the east and the west winds  
sweep the extensive spaces  
with the fragrance of His gardens  
what a wonderful spectacle it is

what splendid worship  
of the Lord of life and death

all souls vibrate with inner music  
there are millions of eyes  
millions of forms  
merged in one eternal Form  
there are millions of faces

millions of silhouettes  
 all form a part of the same universal gaze  
 there are millions of lights within  
 pushing darkness into extreme recesses  
 the eternal lamp  
 burns for ever  
 to worship the Lord of the universe  
 the little bird, cuckoo, the being is thirsty  
 longing to drink the nectar of the Guru  
 Nānak prays for universal peace and prosperity ...

from Jagan Nāth the wanderers reached  
 a deserted place on the shore of the ocean  
 in the southern country  
 far from all habitation  
 from all nature and culture  
 Mardānā was forlorn  
 he was thirsty  
 he could stand no more  
 but there was no water in sight  
 there was nothing but the vast spaces of sand

suddenly a jackal appeared on the scene  
 and bowed before the Bābā  
 the Guru was happy  
 there was no water  
 but there was the insignia of water  
 of all that quenches thirst and hunger  
 the travellers followed the mysterious jackal  
 as they reached the other side of the desert

they saw a small lake  
full of the purest water

Mardānā drank to his fill  
he had never tasted such a sweet  
and invigorating drink  
his greed overtook him  
he went to the other side of the lake  
to drink more water  
to quench his unending thirst  
as he tasted the sparkling water  
he fell down

the water was poisonous  
the Bābā came to his rescue  
he explained to him the secret of the divine jackal  
who was sent by the Lord Himself ...  
then as usual Mardānā was hungry  
the Bābā told him to wait on the bank  
as he takes a dip in the lake  
it took him long in the depths of the mysterious lake

Mardānā was anxious  
he was worried  
he started crying for his Guru

after a long interval the Bābā reappeared  
resplendent in heavenly robes  
with the divine food in his hands  
as Mardānā had his fill  
he was overjoyed  
he was transported to the heavenly bliss ...

the two travellers continued their pilgrimage  
of the wonderful universe of the Lord  
they walked for days, for months  
and reached an absolute wilderness  
for miles there was nothing but sand dunes  
there was no vegetation, no culture  
there was no life, no movement

Mardānā was frightened  
in this vast land with no end in sight  
he cried, O dear Bābā  
where have you brought me  
there is nothing to see  
none to talk to  
there is not even a tree, a bush  
that he could embrace and cry  
there is no country, no company  
the Bābā counselled patience  
we have travelled so far  
to be one with the Master of the universe  
away from all hassle  
from all that disturbs your attention  
your meditation  
there is nothing but sand dunes to walk on  
and the stars to gaze  
the great canopy of the vast blue sky is above us  
the air is pure  
the atmosphere is beyond all worldly impurities

this is the right place for peaceful reflection  
for meditation and prayer  
for days and months we have walked  
to reach this heavenly abode of the Master  
to breathe this purest of the breezes  
to think of none but our dear Lord  
tune your Rabāb and play the divine rhythm  
the divine music  
that vibrates in this spiritual domain  
in this sphere of absolute sublimity

of Truth and Love  
of Trance and Tranquillity ...

the eternal travellers continued their journey  
from the sand dunes of the vast deserts  
they turned to the North  
to the snow clad mountains of the great Himalayas  
it took them several months  
through wilderness  
through jungles and woods  
infested with the bandits of the midlands  
the Bābā continued to preach and pray  
for their physical and spiritual health

when finally they reached the summit  
of Sumer Parbat, the snow clad golden hills  
which were famous for their diamonds  
their gold and silver  
their yogis and siddhas

they saw the yogis lying in trance  
 since ages they had not moved  
 the Bābā uttered the divine Shabad, the heavenly Word  
 to wake the sleeping sadhus  
 the yogis moved to the strange voice  
 that came from the depths of nowhere  
 for they had forgotten even the human voice  
 for centuries they were oblivious of the affairs of the world  
 they had gone into slumber  
 never to wake  
 never to bother about this mundane world

the Bābā reminded them of their duties  
 of their Dharma  
 of their mission to spread the love of the Lord  
 to declare the sublime Word of the Master  
 the yogis had lived in a dream world  
 they had forgotten the vast suffering humanity  
 it was the Age of Kaliyug  
 the Bābā reminded the careless yogis  
 they should not enjoy their spiritual bliss  
 while the populace in the underworld

in the vast lands of Bhārat  
 their sacred land  
 was suffering  
 caught in the most illusory snares of the world  
 the Kaliyug, the Dark Ages had engulfed their countrymen  
 how can they be oblivious of their lot  
 of their pains and passions

they must descend to the world below  
and work for their uplift  
to preach Truth and Love  
to spread the Word of God  
of honesty and humility

the spiritual powers, the miracles  
are of no use  
declared the Bābā  
the sadhus, the seers  
the siddhas, the yogis  
must not renounce this world  
to remain in their ignorant bliss  
it is the duty of the pure and the sublime  
to help others  
to alleviate suffering and pain  
to share their burden  
the divine beings must not be egoist  
they must partake in the general penance  
in the problems and prayers of the meek and the humble  
of those who know not what they lack  
what they suffer  
the Truth and Love of the Master  
is the precious gift for all

there is no high  
no low  
in the eyes of the Lord  
there is absolute equality

the lowly must not be ignored  
 they deserve the most from the divine grace  
 God loves those who love the others  
 the forlorn and the poor  
 the needy and the wretched  
 there are no chosen people  
 there is absolute equality  
 there is no class, no creed  
 no high, no low  
 all must be treated equally  
 all must benefit from the grace of the Guru...

from the inaccessible mountains to the plains of Kāmrūp  
 it was a long way  
 but Mardānā and the Bābā were made of tough clay  
 they continued to walk, to trek  
 through thick and thin  
 through all the hardships of the routes of the Middle Ages

the Bābā had a mission  
 it had to be performed  
 it had to be followed

the land of Kāmrūp was known for its beauty  
 for the most fair damsels of Hindustān  
 many a man had lost his heart  
 in search of love and lust  
 in search of false infatuation  
 the most beautiful girls of Bhārat  
 had ensnared many a prince  
 nobody had ever resisted their charm

as Mardānā was always anxious  
 always in trouble  
 he left for the city of pleasure while the Bābā was asleep

when the Bābā woke up  
 he realised the misadventure  
 that Mardānā was about to get into  
 when after a long time the disciple did not return  
 the Bābā left for the net of passion and pleasure  
 as he entered the House of the Queen of the fairies  
 Her Majesty fell at the feet of the Bābā  
 she immediately recognised the great divine Master  
 and pleaded for prayer and providence

for the Bābā  
 every being  
 whatever her state and standing  
 was the creature of his Master  
 she deserved all care and credence  
 all the divine gifts of truth and love  
 she was duly blessed  
 but was forbidden to trade in evil deeds  
 in evil snares

after the boon  
 the Bābā saw his disciple, Mardānā  
 who had fallen to the charms of the fair maidens  
 who had been transformed into a sheep  
 who had been subdued and humbled  
 who had surrendered all his body and soul

to the most beautiful girls he had ever seen  
it was not his fault

after all he was a simple human being  
what could he do before those most enchanting fairies  
he was forgiven

the slave girls  
the maidens of the Queen of Kāmrūp  
had turned a young man into  
the most humble and meek lover

the Bābā was graceful  
the Queen was humble  
she asked for forgiveness  
and brought the innocent Mardānā to his original state

the Bābā blessed all the denizens of Kāmrūp  
the House of Pleasure was transformed  
into the House of God  
of worship and prayers  
the Queen and her girls became the young disciples  
of the eternal Guru  
the great Bābā  
the divine Master ...

from Kāmrūp the travellers  
moved to the Muslim lands  
it was a hazardous journey  
it took long, very long  
several months  
to reach  
the holiest of the holies  
the most sacred Ka'bah  
as they had been tired  
they went to sleep ...

a Mullah passed by  
and saw the Bābā with his feet towards the great Ka'bah  
he was furious  
how could a mortal, an infidel  
dare rest with his feet  
towards the holiest of the shrines  
it was the greatest sacrilege  
he moved the feet to the east  
in the opposite direction to where the Ka'bah was

the miracle of the miracles  
as the feet moved  
so did the Ka'bah  
the Mullah was astonished  
what had happened  
the House of God  
the House of Allah  
was following this infidel, this pagan ...

as the Bābā awoke  
he realised the predicament of the poor Mullah

do not worry, my dear Mullah  
nothing has happened  
the Ka'bah is where it was  
only the curtain of your ignorance has been removed  
the Ka'bah is the House of worship  
but God is everywhere, Allah is everywhere  
the greatest miracle is His omnipresence  
you want to confine the greatest of the powers

to one small place  
to one narrow quarter  
it cannot be done

Allah's presence must be felt in all corners  
in all directions  
east and west, north and south  
all directions are sacred  
they all belong to the same Almighty Lord  
rituals and superstitions are of no avail  
there are not only five prayers  
and certain periods of fasting  
one must pray all the time  
one must remember his Master at all moments  
one must fast every day  
fasting on certain days or months  
and then eating like animals on other days  
is no prayer  
is no sacred worship

Allah's Truth and Love surcharge the whole universe  
all humanity  
all classes and creeds  
all people, rich and poor  
all men, all women  
His dispensation is for all  
without any discrepancy  
without any distinction  
without any differentiation ...

and so it went on  
the *Udāsīs*  
the journeys of the indefatigable travellers  
they encountered sadhus and faqirs  
they discussed the affairs of this and the other world  
they dwelt deep into the mysteries of life  
of divine creation  
of spiritual flights  
of intellectual incisions ...

off and on there were miracles  
to prove a point  
to change the hardened minds of the stubborn  
to show the Truth of the True Lord  
to remove the darkness of ignorance ...

Truth and Love  
were always the ultimate refrain  
of their mission  
of their message ...

Mardānā was always curious  
my dear Bābā, the Sage, the Great Master !

you have been critical  
of temples, of mosques  
of Hindus, of Muslims  
of sadhus, of siddhas ...

are you sure  
your followers will listen to what you preach  
what you discern and describe ?

no, my dear Mardānā  
I have no illusions  
humanity is like the tail of a dog  
it can never be straightened

my followers will also be caught in the snares of māyā  
in the mire of classes and castes  
they will fight for the gaddīs, for the ḡerās

replete with rites and rituals  
their houses of worship will be  
no different from the temples and the mosques  
they will bother more about dress and diet  
than Truth and Love  
they will worship the Granth  
and will never reflect on  
what is written in it  
they will have no time  
for meditation and introspection  
for honest and true deeds ...

but what can I do ?  
what can we do ?

I follow my mission  
I proclaim the Word of the Lord  
I live in His will  
in His truth and love  
in His rhythm and reason ...

what has to happen will happen  
one must follow His order  
His dictates, His dispensation ...

Mardānā continued with his doubts  
O wise and sage Bābā !  
we have travelled so many years  
east and west, north and south  
mountains and seas  
deserts and depressions  
met so many sadhus, yogis, faqirs  
learned men of all religions and sects  
when we started  
we were young and strong  
now we are old and tired  
and yet I am not sure  
I understand this life, this universe

O Bābā, please tell me  
what is a Shabad ? what is a Sikh ?

my dear Mardānā  
you always ask questions  
which do not have any answers  
any explanations ...

a Sikh is a shishya  
a disciple, a student, a seeker  
who wants to know, to comprehend  
the infinite, the incomprehensible ...

you see these trees around us  
they all have different forms  
different trunks, different branches  
different leaves, different flowers

even on one tree, all leaves, all flowers  
are different from each other  
how these forms are born, grow, blossom  
who knows ? ...  
who knows ? ...

the Lord of humanity  
has created this mysterious universe  
we have met  
so many wise men and women  
with so many concepts and ideas  
of truth and justice  
of good and evil  
of nature and culture

of body and soul  
they are infinite  
created by the Infinite

a Sikh is a student  
who is always in search of the Truth  
this infinite and incomprehensible Truth  
for more he knows  
more he realises  
there is more to know  
knowledge has no frontiers  
no finite forms  
no definitive answers ...

the Sikh follows his Guru's Shabad  
his Guru's discourse

Shabad is the first sound  
the first utterance  
that created the universe  
that was created with the universe  
it is the discourse of the Guru  
it explains and discerns  
it articulates and animates  
the eternal, transcendental Truth  
of forms and concepts  
of sublime ideas  
of infinite horizons  
of hearts and hearths  
of men and women  
of young and old  
of this marvellous nature

thus O dear Mardānā  
 the Shabad is both the creator and the created  
 the forms created lead to new forms  
 the ideas created lead to new ideas  
 there is no end to this creation  
 the trees, the flowers  
 will continue to have ever new forms  
 the ideas and concepts  
 will continue to discern and discourse

a Sikh will always be a Sikh  
 a student, a seeker  
 the Shabad of the Guru  
 will always enlighten his Sikh  
 to the sublimity of life  
 to the infinity of forms  
 to the eternity of Truth ...

the manmukh, the fool thinks, he knows  
 what is tree, what is leaf, what is flower  
 what is man, what is woman  
 what is life, what is death

the gurmukh, the wise man, the philosopher  
 the artist, the student, the Sikh  
 knows that he does not know

all his life he spends in search of the Truth  
 of tree, of leaf, of flower  
 of man, of woman

of life, of death  
of this absolute mysterious universe

he discerns and discourses  
he articulates in forms and ideas  
he creates incisive texts  
he continues his search  
inspiring others  
the following generations  
to conceptualise and create  
more and more incisive texts and forms  
to articulate and animate  
the evolutionary process  
the creative process

that began with the first Shabad  
the first music, the first rhythm, the first nād

the object of knowledge  
is not this tree, this leaf, this flower  
this man, this woman  
this life, this death  
it is the concept or the idea  
of tree, of leaf, of flower  
of man, of woman  
of life, of death  
that is responsible  
for the infinity and continuity of each of these

we move from the concrete to the abstract  
 and from the abstract to the concrete  
 we reflect and meditate  
 on the eternal nature, on the eternal evolution

we feel, we imagine, we analyse  
 we constitute incisive discourses  
 of this most mysterious universe  
 of concepts and ideas  
 which engender other concepts and ideas ...

the Guru's Shabad  
 discerns and discourses  
 the ultimate Truth and Verity  
 the ultimate Mystery

when the mind is steady  
 and the body is balanced  
 we reflect without deception  
 we meditate without distraction  
 we comprehend concepts and ideas  
 we understand the true nature  
 without fear or faction  
 without hurdles or hindrance

to grasp the knowledge of the Infinite  
 one has to merge with the Infinite  
 one has to meditate in absolute isolation  
 away from all prejudice  
 away from all consideration  
 what we see is māyā, an illusion  
 what we perceive is Truth, the Verity

the eternal Shabad  
the eternal concept  
is the cause of all creation  
of all trees, of all leaves, of all flowers  
of all men, of all women  
of all life, of all death  
all that is created  
is consumed  
all that is constructed  
is destroyed  
all that is born  
dies

where they come from  
where they go  
nobody knows

what is  
is not  
what may be  
may be  
this whole universe  
is just a dream  
just a concept

just an idea  
of the Lord of the Universe ...

those who meditate and reflect  
to understand this concept  
live in His will  
in His comprehension  
they acquire the ultimate Knowledge  
in the domain of non-knowledge  
where truth, beauty, justice  
are conceptual constructs  
where cultures and traditions  
are in eternal flux

where images and incisions  
ideas and instincts  
enlighten the student, the Sikh  
of ultimate Truth  
of ultimate Verity

where the being realises  
his Being  
and the Being of the Other  
of every being who is his Other  
in His conceptual domain  
in His universe of imagination  
in His transcendental horizon  
in His Union  
in His Love !

most revered Bābā  
 I feel enlightened  
 but I am not sure  
 I comprehend all the fine points  
 you have enunciated  
 in your most lucid discourse

in yonder days  
 you composed hymns on Truth  
 Truth before the beginning of the sublime Time  
 Truth through the ages  
 Truth, it will ever be  
 you discerned  
 what is this Truth, O dear Bābā  
 the greatest of the sages !

my dear Mardānā  
 you want to know every thing

knowledge is a dangerous pursuit  
 the erudite, the philosophers  
 the pundits, the logicians through the ages  
 all have tried to unravel the mystery  
 of the most mysterious  
 the most complex paradox of cosmic Truth

all fell in the trap of pride and prejudice  
 in this wild goose chase  
 of knowing the unknowable  
 in the fruitless efforts  
 of solving the eternal riddle

the divine principle of all existence  
manifest or immanent

my dear Mardānā  
the divine shabad is the discourse of Truth  
it is the cosmic principle  
of all existence  
of life, of death  
of growth, of decay  
of all that is  
that may be

as you sow  
so do you reap  
says the sage

but what do you sow ?  
what can you possibly sow ?  
and what do you reap ?  
what can you possibly reap ?

in this duality of sowing and reaping  
in this paradox of action and reward  
none is sure  
none can foresee the inevitable  
there are numerous forms  
there are numerous silhouettes  
numerous nuances  
between the beginning and the end  
in this most wonderful nature  
in this most varied culture

there are parallels  
there are differences  
all depends upon the cosmic principle  
upon the Truth of every existence  
human or animal  
animate or inanimate  
the Truth of existence  
holds the tension  
the balance  
the cosmic vibration  
that surcharges every universe  
conceptual or physical

Truth is a conceptual construct  
that is envisaged  
that is realised  
in the domain of ideas  
in the domain of images  
in the domain of cosmic discourse  
that is the cause  
of all being  
of all becoming

sages and erudite  
have attempted to discern and describe  
but our words and thoughts do not coincide  
the Truth  
the eternal principle  
of all being and becoming  
transcends all composition

all articulation  
all knowledge  
all comprehension

the sun, the moon  
the stars, the planets  
all the four corners of the universe  
east and west  
north and south  
the vast spaces  
lost in the cosmic infinity  
defy all descriptions

the cosmic tale  
has no beginning, no end  
it began before the beginning of Time  
it will continue beyond the infinite horizons  
of every possible imagination  
of every possible dream

the Infinite Creator  
has created this Infinity  
millions of suns and moons  
millions of stars and planets  
earths and heavens  
men and women  
nature and culture  
are held together  
with invisible force

there are luminous spaces  
there are dark regions  
bound by cosmic rays  
they keep a respectable distance

since millions of years  
they move in unison  
but off and on  
there are collisions  
there are catastrophic encounters  
there are attractions  
there are distractions  
there are relations  
there are aberrations  
there are marriages  
there are divorces

held by the invisible gravity  
and the invisible time  
they follow the divine law  
the cosmic discourse of Truth and Time  
the unfathomable Truth  
the immeasurable Time

in the universe of stars and planets  
in the universe of vegetation  
in the universe of animals and birds  
in the universe of men and women  
in different spaces  
in different regions  
in different lands

there are varied forms  
varied sizes and colours  
varied movements, pulls and pushes  
varied enunciations, music and tunes  
they all follow the eternal laws of nature  
of eternal Truth

this most beautiful and wondrous creation  
is tuned to the sublime hymn of Truth  
to the eternal cycle of growth and decay  
of life and death  
of destruction and resurrection

the cosmic Truth  
is the cosmic music  
its invisible, melodious vibrations  
resound in the infinite universe  
of eternal and sublime creativity  
that continues to constitute  
the most splendid images  
on the horizons of hope and despair  
of incessant struggle for existence  
of immeasurable note of harmony

moderation is the order of Time and Truth  
those who pretend to know every thing  
know nothing

whosoever tries to transcend  
the ordained thresholds  
the ordained horizons  
falls in the trap of pride and prejudice

Rāvana was the greatest scholar  
of Vedas and Puranas  
his pride, his greed, his lust let him down  
he left this world in ignominy  
his erudition is forgotten  
his futile projections  
his deceptive intrigues  
constitute the folklore of the day

in eating, in drinking  
in every aspect of life  
in knowledge, in erudition  
one must be humble  
one must follow the age old dictum  
of moving with care and caution  
with harmony and humility

the cosmic music, the cosmic truth  
follows a certain concordance  
a certain communion  
that must never be transgressed  
that must never be surcharged  
with discordant notes  
with doubts and disputes

all vegetation  
all nature  
must submit to the ravages of Time

there are flowers  
that bloom only a season  
and there are mountains  
that subsist for millions of years

but nothing lasts for ever  
even the great Himalayas  
have emerged from endless waters  
water is the womb of all beings, entities  
animate or inanimate  
it is also their grave  
there is incessant movement

the typhoons, the earthquakes, the eruptions  
continue to transform  
earths, mountains, seas, civilisations, cultures  
the citadels of this mundane world  
earths and heavens  
planets and stars

continue to appear and disappear  
even our earth, our mother earth, will one day  
complete its physical appearance

it will be inundated by the great deluge  
the Parlo  
as has been ordained by the old sages

O revered Bābā, I am scared  
there will be no religions, no races  
no sadhus, no sages  
no kings, no queens  
no princes, no princess  
no trees, no flowers

my dear Mardānā  
it is all a matter of Time  
all that is born must die  
all that is constructed will end up in ruins  
all growth and decay  
occurs in physical time

in the eternal Time  
we begin from nothing  
we end in nothing  
this is the sublime Truth

after one civilisation  
there is an other  
after one religion  
there is an other set of beliefs

the prophets, the avatars, the sages  
follow the same sequence

all beings, all entities  
are circumscribed

all must submit to the eternal verdict  
 only the sublime Time and Truth  
 are eternal and infinite  
 like the Infinite Creator of the universe

my dear Mardānā  
 one must comprehend  
 the vicissitudes of Time

one must bow  
 to the inevitable law of Nature  
 in all humility  
 one must acknowledge  
 the fatality, the futility  
 of transgressing the thresholds  
 of piercing through the horizons  
 of imagination and creativity

there must be a concordance  
 a correspondence  
 between the concrete and the abstract  
 between the known and the unknown  
 between acquisitions and propositions

the search for Truth  
 is a humane act  
 a pious, noble attitude  
 but it requires a certain sustenance  
 a certain balance of mind and intellect

the music of spheres  
the rhythm that holds  
the movement of the stars and the planets  
allude to that cosmic harmony  
that must set the pace  
of all mental activity  
of all conceptual creativity

before one articulates the cosmic discourse  
the discourse of Truth and Time  
one must perceive the sublime images and horizons  
one must reflect upon  
the most abstract delineations  
of the divine contours  
in this cosmic infinity  
silence is the order of Nature  
in this cosmic music  
the divine harmony  
defies all human rhymes and reasons  
it reverberates in the sublime cosmos  
it resounds in the voids of eternity ...

and thus the disciple and the Guru  
continued their endless journeys  
through jungles and mountains  
through deserts and depressions  
they discussed and discerned  
the ways of the world  
the ways of the sublime  
of loves and longings  
of unions and separations

blessed are those  
who live in love  
in the harmony of body and spirit  
in the rhythm of their heart  
in the music of their soul  
to love is to give  
to surrender  
to be one with the other  
in thought and deed  
in meditation and reflection

the sublime moments of love  
the rhythmic movements of the heart  
the pangs of separation  
the mysterious depths of the unknown  
the anxieties, the hesitations  
the moments of faith and fortitude  
the horizons of dark clouds  
of despair and depression  
of the mysterious rhythms of desires  
of the absolute  
of the One Eternal Unity

where life and death dissolve  
in the everlasting Being  
where one knows not where one is  
where one is ever lonely  
where Time and Space  
lose their identity

where one cannot differentiate  
between the cosmic union  
and the cosmic dissolution

life and death are inseparable  
my dear Mardānā  
to live is to die  
to die is to live  
one who carries his death on his shoulder  
lives for ever  
one who is afraid of death  
dies every moment

where there is fear  
there is death  
where there is faith  
there is life  
love and separation  
life and death  
dissolve into each other

on the horizon of life is death  
on the horizon of love is separation  
on the horizon of anguish is bliss

in this vast universe  
under the canopy of the sky and the stars  
in this endless wilderness of mind and body  
we reflect on the destiny of the beings  
lost in the search of the self  
of the unknown  
of the other

of love and hate  
of life and death  
of rise and fall  
of heart and hearth

in these moments of reflection  
in these rhythms of sublime music  
there is no life, no death  
no love  
no separation

there is eternal union  
there is eternal serenity

to love is to transcend  
the being and the other  
to live is to be eternally engaged  
in the endless struggle  
of evil and good  
of truth and falsity

within one's own self  
within one's own dimensions  
there is absolute restlessness  
there are unknown dangers  
there are dark depressions  
there is no peace for the brave  
there is no tranquillity for the lover  
every moment is surcharged with anxiety  
with the sword of death and destruction  
with the pangs of separation

this is the lot of those  
who dare  
to live  
to love  
who reflect on the ways of the world  
who meditate on the mysteries of the universe

my dear Mardānā  
there is no easy path  
no rituals  
no prayers can help you cross this fierce ocean  
you must plunge deep into these fathomless waters

you must risk all  
lovers and warriors  
must never look back  
their journey is endless  
none has ever seen the other side  
there is nothing beyond the horizon  
there are no thresholds to cross  
no dimensions to measure

one must go on and on  
one must experience the most excruciating pains of love  
one must suffer the most anxious moments

in absolute anguish  
in absolute agony ...

*jo to prēm khēlan ka chāo  
 sir dhar talī galī mērī āo  
 it mārag per dharijē  
 sir dījē kān na kījē*

my dear Mardānā  
 all this confusion  
 all this discord  
 is due to human nature  
 man and woman  
 are independent but interrelated complexities

they are created in the image of God  
 and like God they are mysterious

they have bodies and souls  
 the worlds within and the worlds without  
 are engulfed in eternal struggle  
 in eternal strife

there are desires and delusions  
 there are hopes and despairs  
 there are loves and longings  
 there are beautiful moments  
 there are periods of anguish and pain

sublimity and serenity  
 are tainted by absolute cruelty and craving  
 there are moments of extreme victimisation  
 there are times of extreme tyranny

the devil and the deity  
belong to the same being

there are complexes of absolute chastity  
there are moments of horrid rapes  
men and women  
are destined to live this eternal curse  
they are thrown in a sea of tribulations  
without any horizon  
without any shore

men and women  
must face this terrible onslaught  
of extreme emotions and extreme anxieties  
peace belongs only to the dead  
to the living dead  
but one must live  
one must fulfil God's mysterious designs  
one must follow His dictates

in age after age  
seers and saints  
priests and prophets  
have tried to solve this riddle  
to simplify what is complex  
to systematise what is sensuous

my dear Mardānā  
it is a futile exercise  
it is an attempt to dehumanise the human  
to ignore the mysterious nature  
of the most complex construct

human mind is an infinite ocean  
 with multiple currents  
 of unknown urges  
 of undiscovered emotions  
 men and women  
 must live their lives  
 their tribulations and temptations  
 their caresses and cruelties  
 their loves and hates  
 their hopes and despairs  
 their affections and affronts

they cannot be chained to this material world  
 this physical, concrete surrounding  
 they must continue to constitute their lives  
 in the domain of imagination  
 in the domain of conceptual constructs

their fancies and fears  
 go beyond the real  
 they live in the surreal  
 in the universe beyond any constraints  
 beyond any deliberate dictates

ideas and instincts must mingle with the unknown  
 with the innermost desires of the mysterious depths

my dear Mardānā  
 men and women are independent  
 but interrelated complexities  
 their individual universes are sacred  
 their existential experiences are holy

but there is also a relation  
also an interaction  
in the dialectics of the being and the other  
there is a respectable space  
but often there is also a collusion  
conflict and concord are the two sides  
of the same spectacle

mercies and murders are the order of the day  
we go from one extreme to the other  
from one temptation to another snare

but that is how it is to be  
His Will must be done  
none dare spoil this sport  
this riddle must remain a riddle forever  
this complexity cannot be simplified

one must face life  
in all its intricacies  
in all its ruptures  
loves and longings  
delusions and deceptions

must follow their course  
must reach their climax ...

kām, krodh  
lobh, moh, ahankār

cannot be wished away  
these five basic human instincts  
of passion, anger  
greed, lust, pride  
fight in the battlefield of life  
to the annihilation of every protagonist  
to the extinction of every being

it is Kaliyug  
the temptress and  
the goddess of fury and revenge  
the tyrant and the god of destruction and devastation  
are ever engaged in their nefarious designs  
in this mad world

men and women  
the being and the other  
all have lost their balance  
love has ceded to lust  
affection has given way to affront  
the world within  
and the world without  
do not find their equilibrium  
they have lost their rhythm

sex, hunger and anger  
rule the roost  
the muse and the music of the soul  
are drowned in the noise of animosities

off and on  
there are moments of reflection  
moments of wisdom and vision  
which herald  
the hope of humanity  
the hope of sublimity and serenity

my dear Mardānā  
Nānak lives for those moments  
of peace and prosperity  
of harmony and happiness  
of rhythm and reason ...

*bikh bohithā lādiā diā samund manjhār  
 kandhī dis na āvāī na urvār na pār  
 vanjhī hāth na khēvtū jal sāgar asrāl  
 bābā jag phāthā mahā jāl*

...  
*koi ākhē bhūtnā ko kahē betālā  
 koi ākhē ādmī Nānak vechārā  
 bheā divānā sāh kā Nānak baurānā  
 hau har bin avar na jāṇā*

...  
 ...

the boat of life  
 laden with the poison of sins  
 is pushed into the ocean of eternity

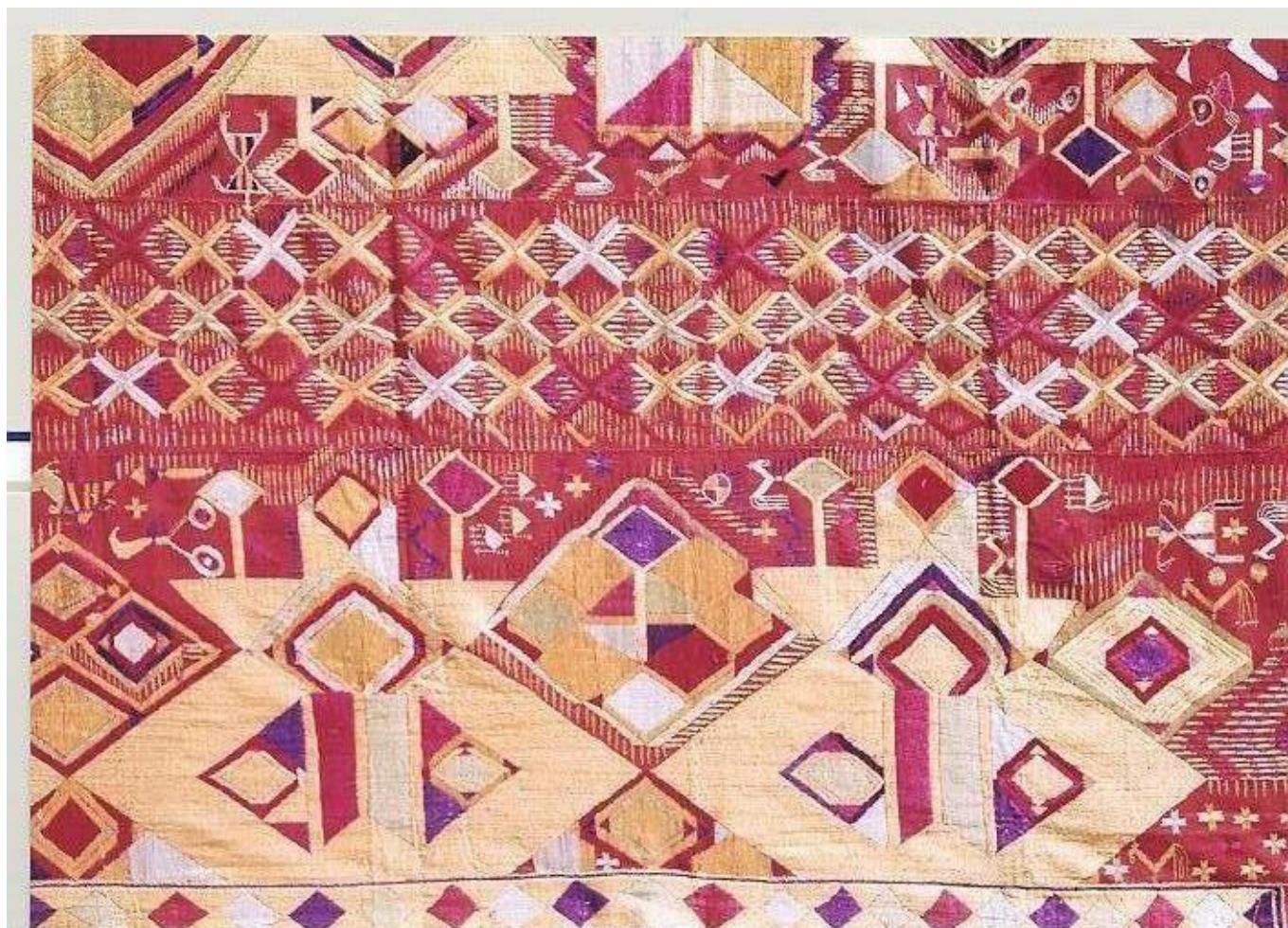
in these vast and deep waters  
 there is no shore, no end across

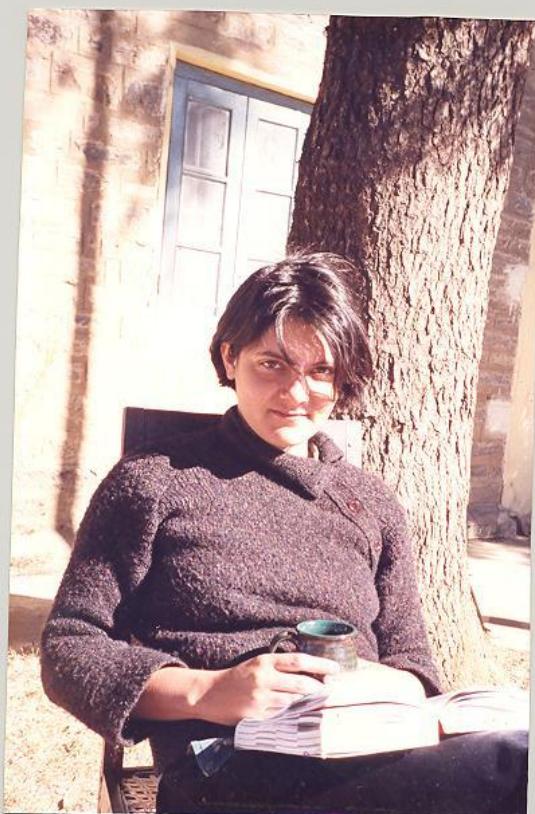
there are no oars, no boatman  
 the currents are strong and frightening

Bābā, the world is stuck in the cobweb  
 of sins and suffering !

...  
 ...

some call me a ghost  
 others consider me deranged  
 a simple, innocent being  
 yes, Nanak is mad in love  
 mad in devotion to his Creator  
 there is none but Thee, none but Thee !



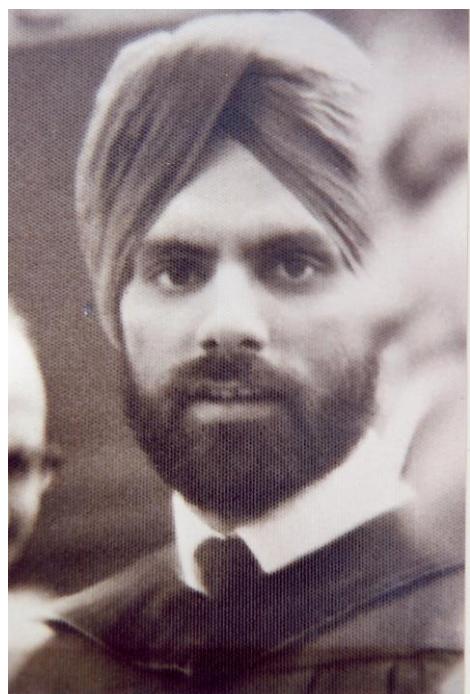




Bibi Ji  
Bibi Gurcharn Kaur



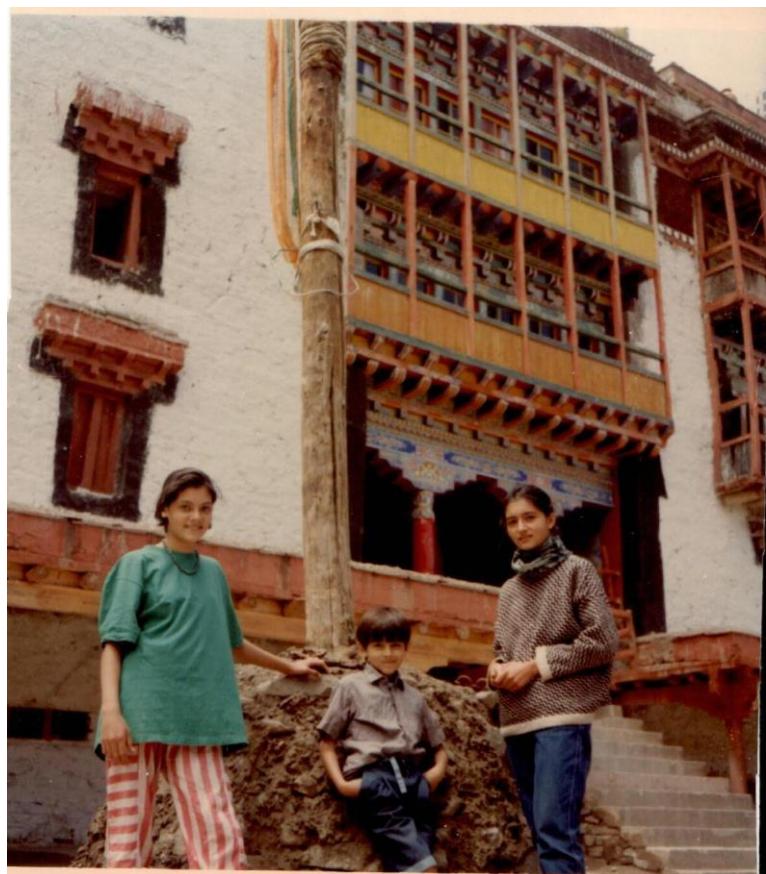
Mama Ji  
Sardar Gurdip Singh Dhillon



Attaché de Recherche  
Centre National de la Recherche  
Scientifique, Paris, 1966.



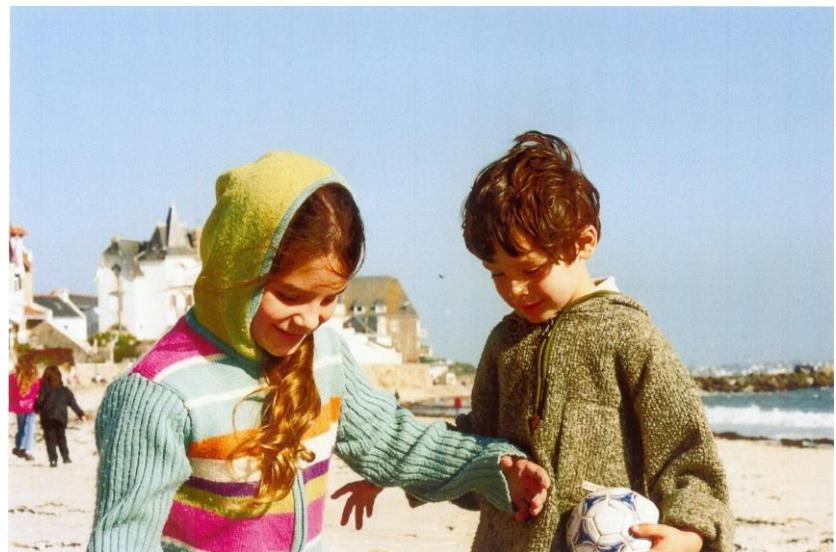
Danielle, Paris, 1966.



Anila, Eric Vikramjeet, Sandrine  
Leh, 1987



with Julie and Eric at Chail



Jaspal and Nilam



Aalia and Ishaan at the Cecil, Shimla

*Reviews of the first edition of Bābā Nānak, 2003.*

'Oh no!' I thought as I opened Harjeet Singh Gill's *Baba Nanak*. Not another of these attempts to retell the story of Guru Nanak in what is meant to be English poetry.' These, it seems, almost invariably consist of dreary prose dressed up as flowery poetry. But I was wrong. I was very wrong. *Baba Nanak*, far from being cast in the style which one normally associates with the 'poetry' of English translations of the Adi Granth, is in fact an excellent piece of work. The works that it paraphrases are some of the finest of Guru Nanak's works, set in the context of his life story and supported by passages from the *janam-sakhis*. *Japuji* naturally appears, as do portions of *Siri Ragu*, and the whole of *Barahmaha*, and *Siddh Gost*.

The style in which the life and travels of Baba Nanak is recorded makes exceedingly pleasant reading and those who wish to have the story well told as simple but effective English poetry will find Gill's work a delight.

*W. H. McLeod*  
*International Journal of Punjab Studies, Oxford, 2003, 10 : 1-2.*

I do not know how Harjeet Singh Gill, Emeritus Professor of Semiotics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, was spurred into song when he elected to write in verse form the story of Guru Nanak, and of his divine hymns in a capsuled, simple, but effective style. Nothing, as far as I know, in Gill's past suggested such a "return of the native" to the faith of his ancestors, for in his long academic career, he remained involved in the study of semiotics and signification under the tutelage of his French mentors and theorists of linguistics.

Whatever the reason, this volume underscores the nature of his inner transformation – from a logician and sceptic to a seeker after truth, with Baba Nanak as his light and guiding star. I could stretch the argument and see how the science of languages, which invests all human thought and its highest reaches, possibly led Gill to apply his earned insights to the Sikh scriptures...Gill's rendering, thus, is simple, direct and nearer to fine prose. And he sustains this discourse with imagination and insight.

*Darshan Singh Maini*  
*The Tribune, October 12, 2003.*

**Seminar on**  
**Signification, Conceptual Structures**  
**and Human Existence**

(In Honor of Professor Harjeet Singh Gill, Professor Emeritus, on his 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday)

**Venue: Committee Room, SLL& CS, JNU**  
**Time: 10.30 A.M onwards, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015.**

Centre for Linguistics in collaboration with Centre for English Studies, SLLCS, JNU is organizing a one-day Seminar on Signification, Conceptual Structures and Human Existence on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015. The main speaker of the event will be Harjeet Singh Gill, Professor Emeritus at JNU since 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2000. Professor Gill who turns 80 that day, through his teaching, research and writing of academic books and papers has inspired nearly two generations of students and colleagues in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences. He opened up a new era and a new philosophical vision of studying and understanding language, literature and culture, deriving primarily from Indian social context and has been able to inspire a large number of students and researches in various parts of India, particularly Punjab and Delhi.

Professor Gill's sustained and systematic orientation in Semiotics began during his days of post-doctoral research with Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), Paris, between 1963 and 1969. He imbibed during his research, much of the intellectually stimulating perspectives on Existentialism and Structuralism that was in vogue in Paris during the 1960s. After his return to India in 1969, he put to effective practice at first in Panjab University, Patiala, and later at J.N.U., much of the profound ideas he had learned from the great French philosophers of the day, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Louis Althusser, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. He made the study of the structures of signification in language, literature, and culture (including folk and mythic narratives) his central concerns in his teaching and research. This unique academic practice attracted towards him a large number of disciples who did doctoral research with him in the aforesaid areas. He was Professor of Linguistics and Semiotics in Centre for Linguistics and English from 1984 to 2000.

**Speakers:**

<b>Saugata Bhaduri, JNU</b>	<b>Anil Bhatti, Professor Emeritus, JNU</b>
<b>Soumyabrata Choudhury, JNU</b>	<b>Saitya Brata Das, JNU</b>
<b>Ayesha Kidwai, JNU</b>	<b>Simi Malhotra, JMI</b>
<b>Franson Manjali, JNU</b>	<b>Vaishna Narang, JNU</b>
<b>Milind Wakankar, IIT, Delhi (expected).</b>	





